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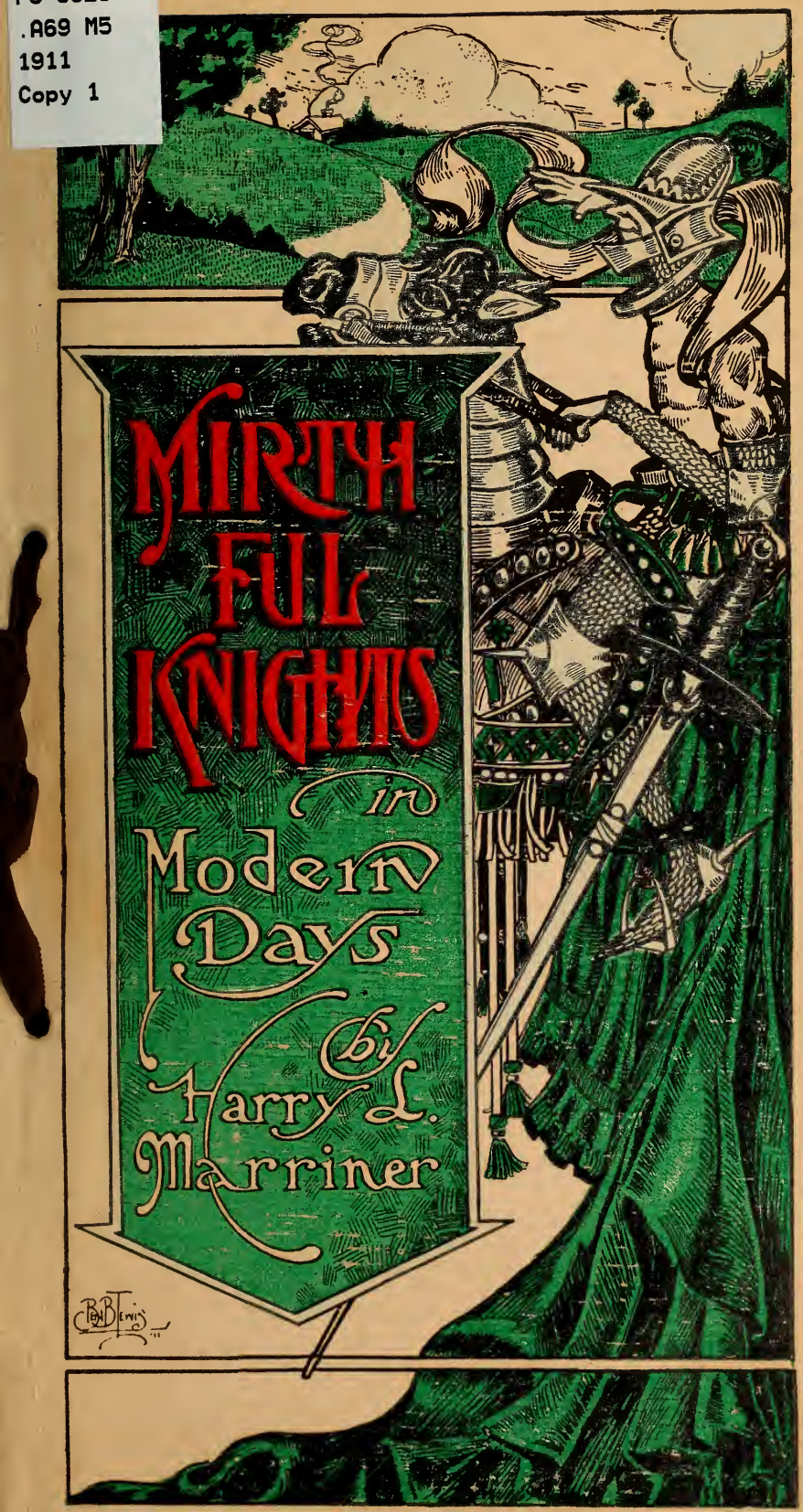
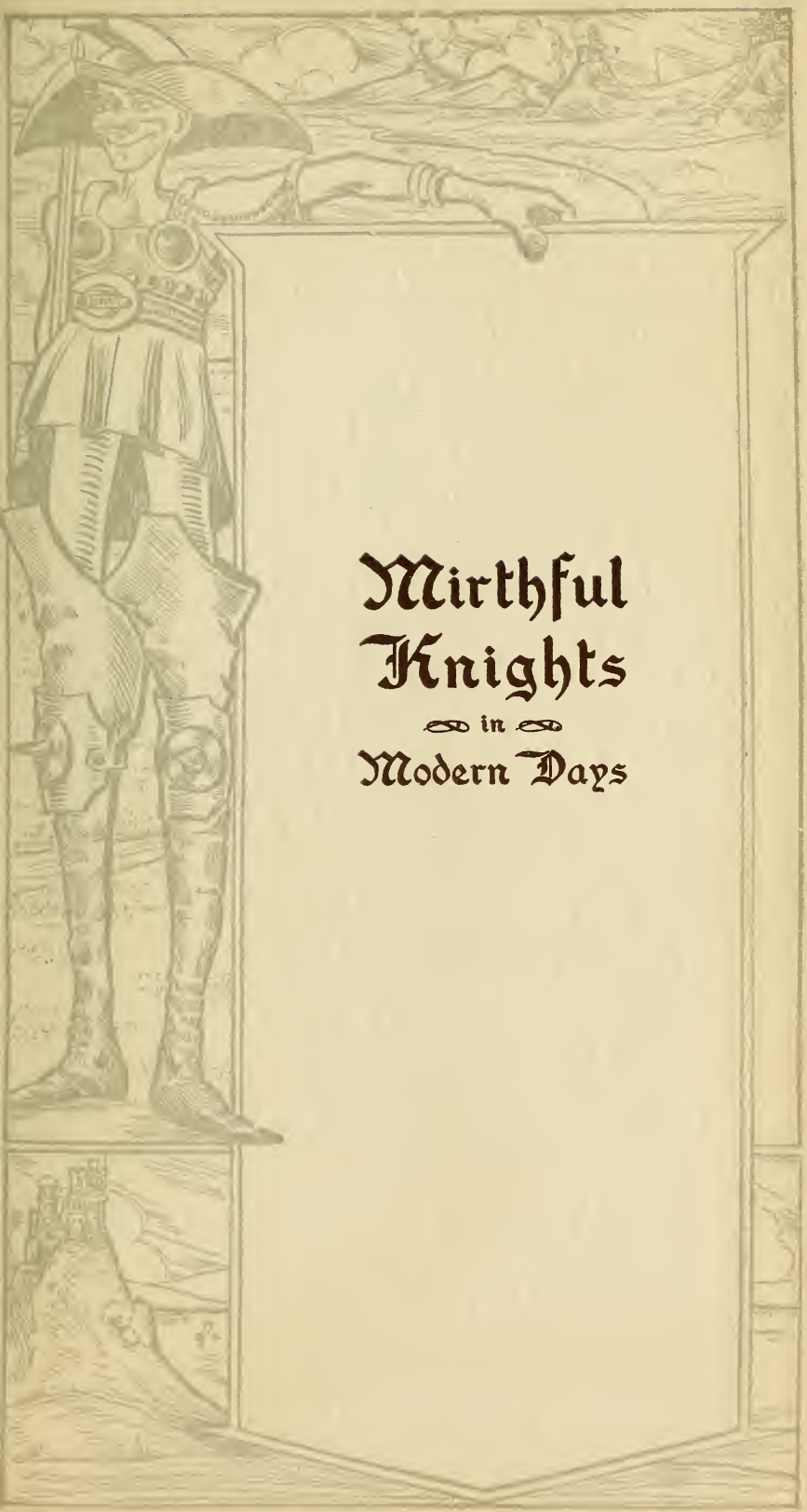
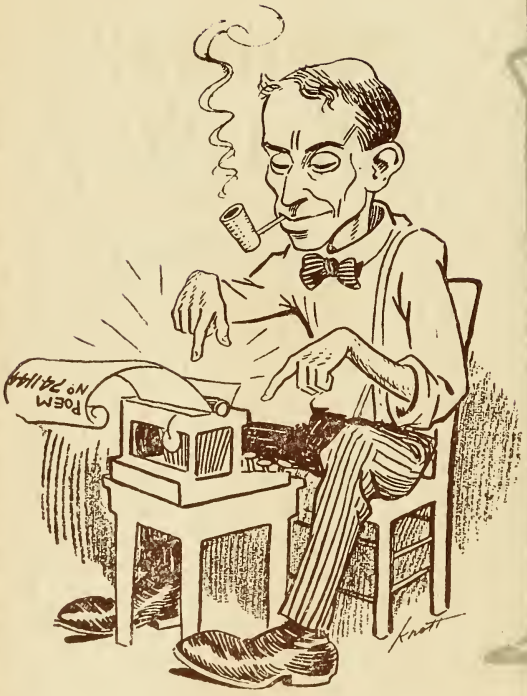




Mirthful Knights in Modern Days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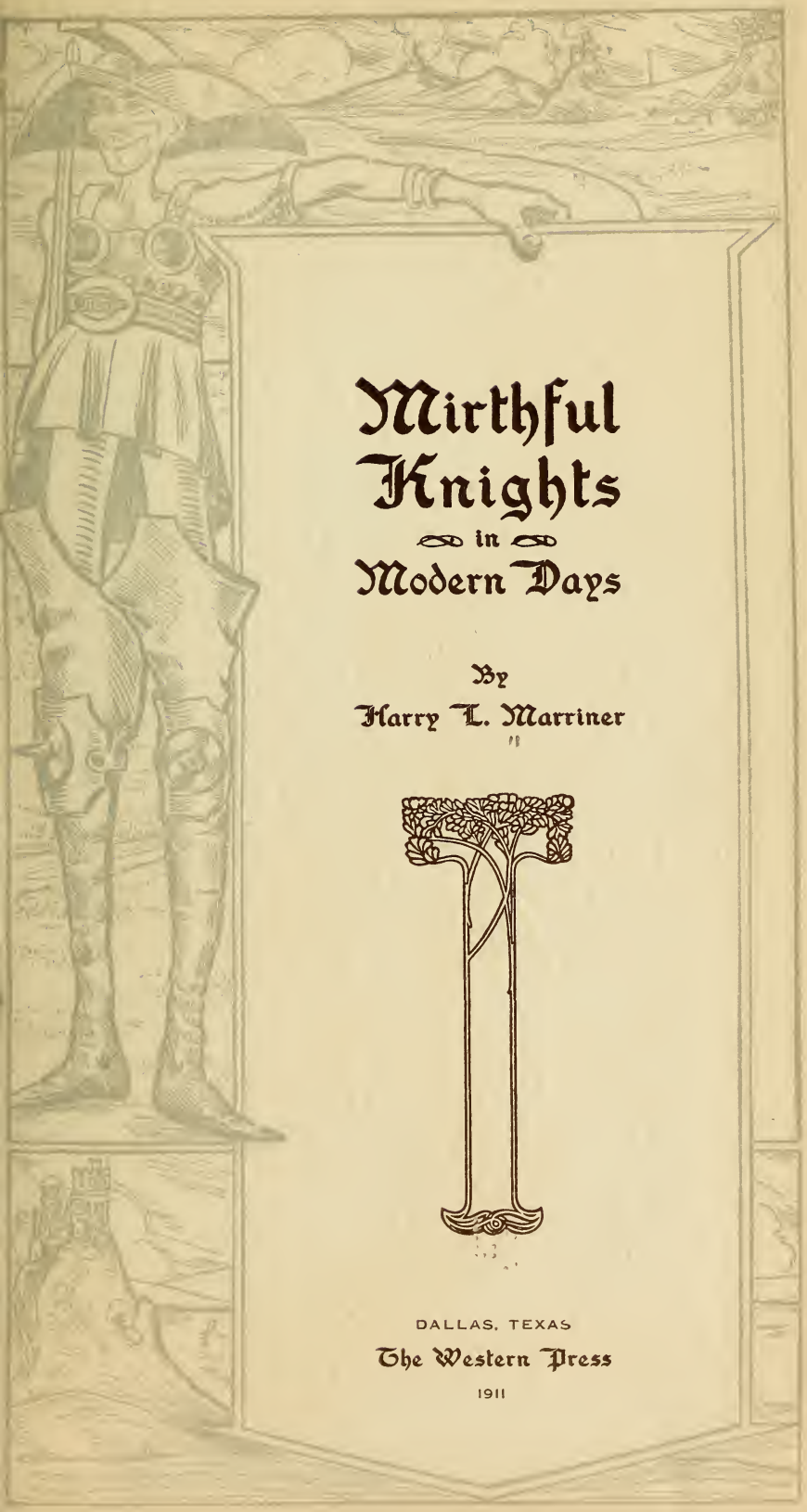


Mirthful Knights in Modern Days

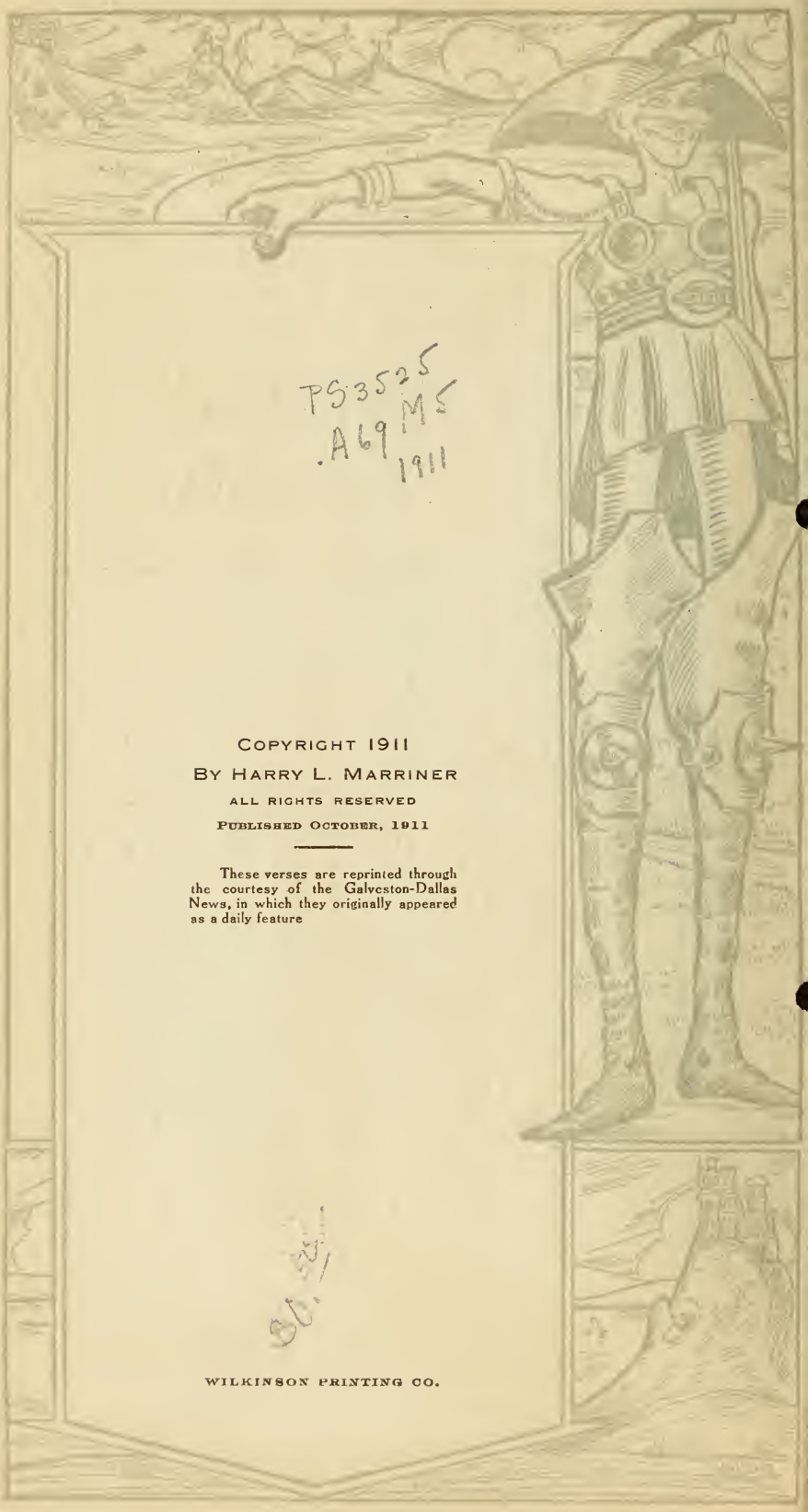
By

Harry L. Marriner

DALLAS, TEXAS

The Western Press

1911



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PUBLISHED OCTOBER, 1911

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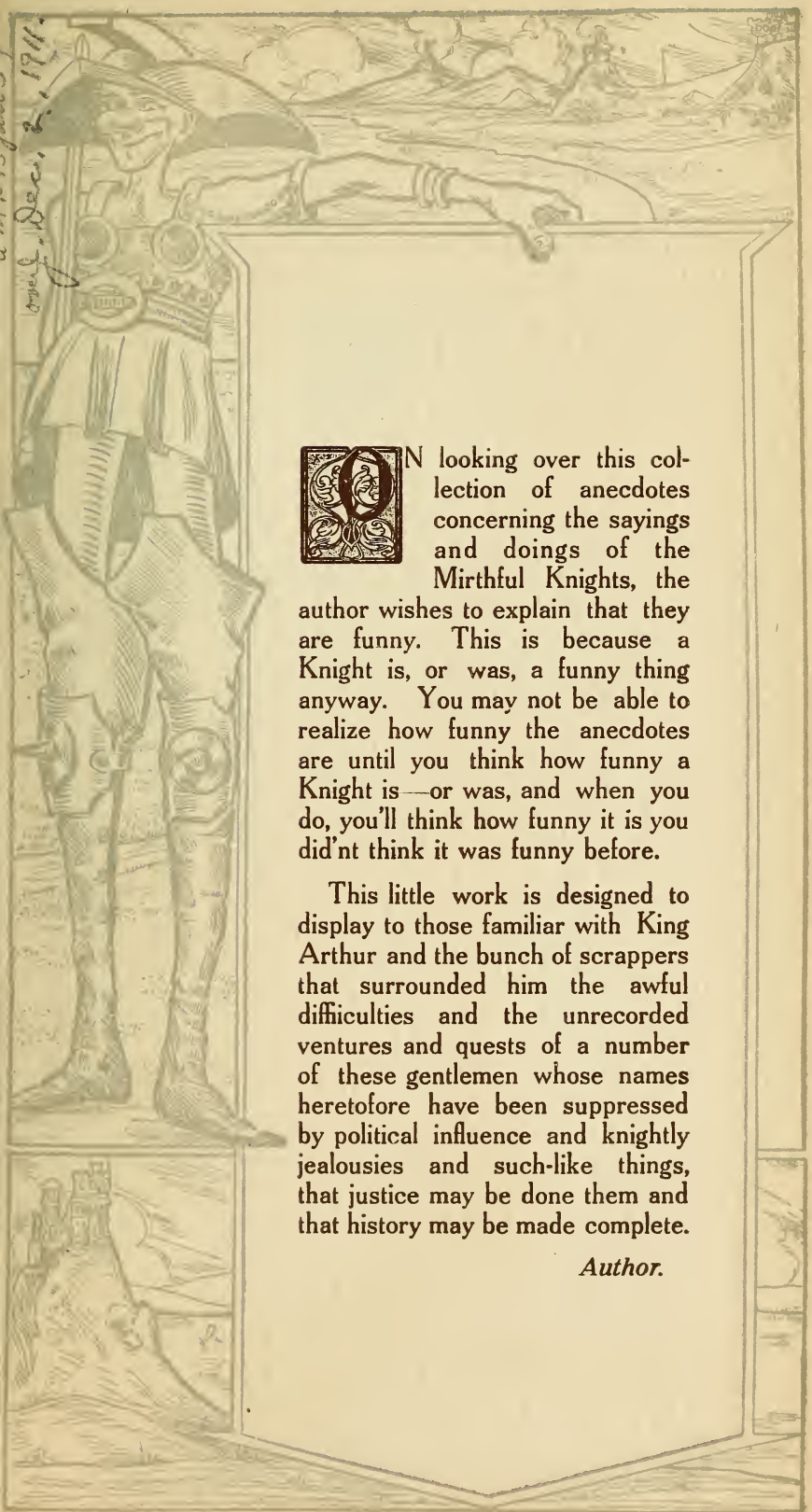
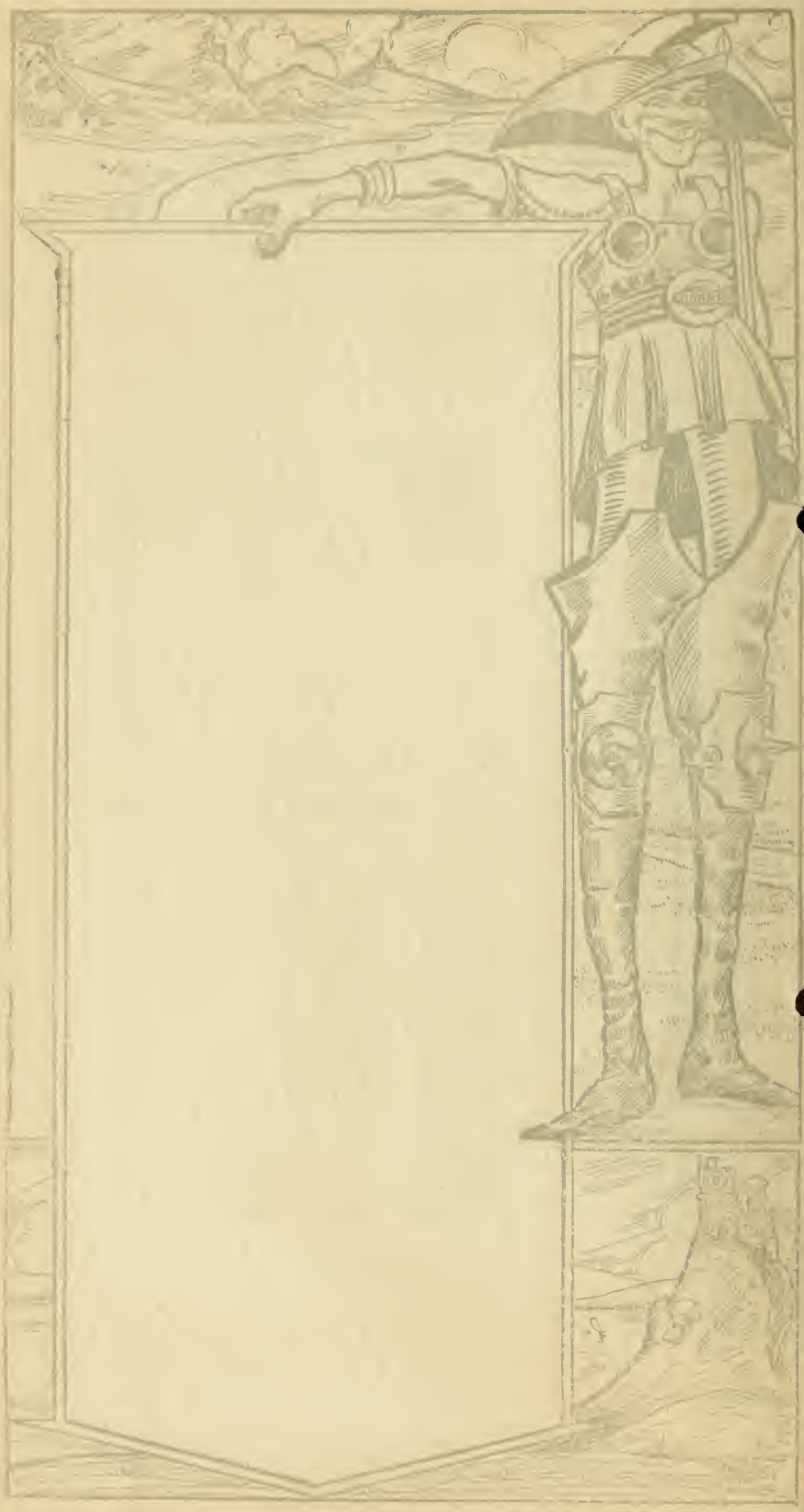


ON looking over this collection of anecdotes concerning the sayings and doings of the Mirthful Knights, the author wishes to explain that they are funny. This is because a Knight is, or was, a funny thing anyway. You may not be able to realize how funny the anecdotes are until you think how funny a Knight is—or was, and when you do, you'll think how funny it is you did'nt think it was funny before.

This little work is designed to display to those familiar with King Arthur and the bunch of scrappers that surrounded him the awful diffiiculties and the unrecorded ventures and quests of a number of these gentlemen whose names heretofore have been suppressed by political influence and knightly jealousies and such-like things, that justice may be done them and that history may be made complete.

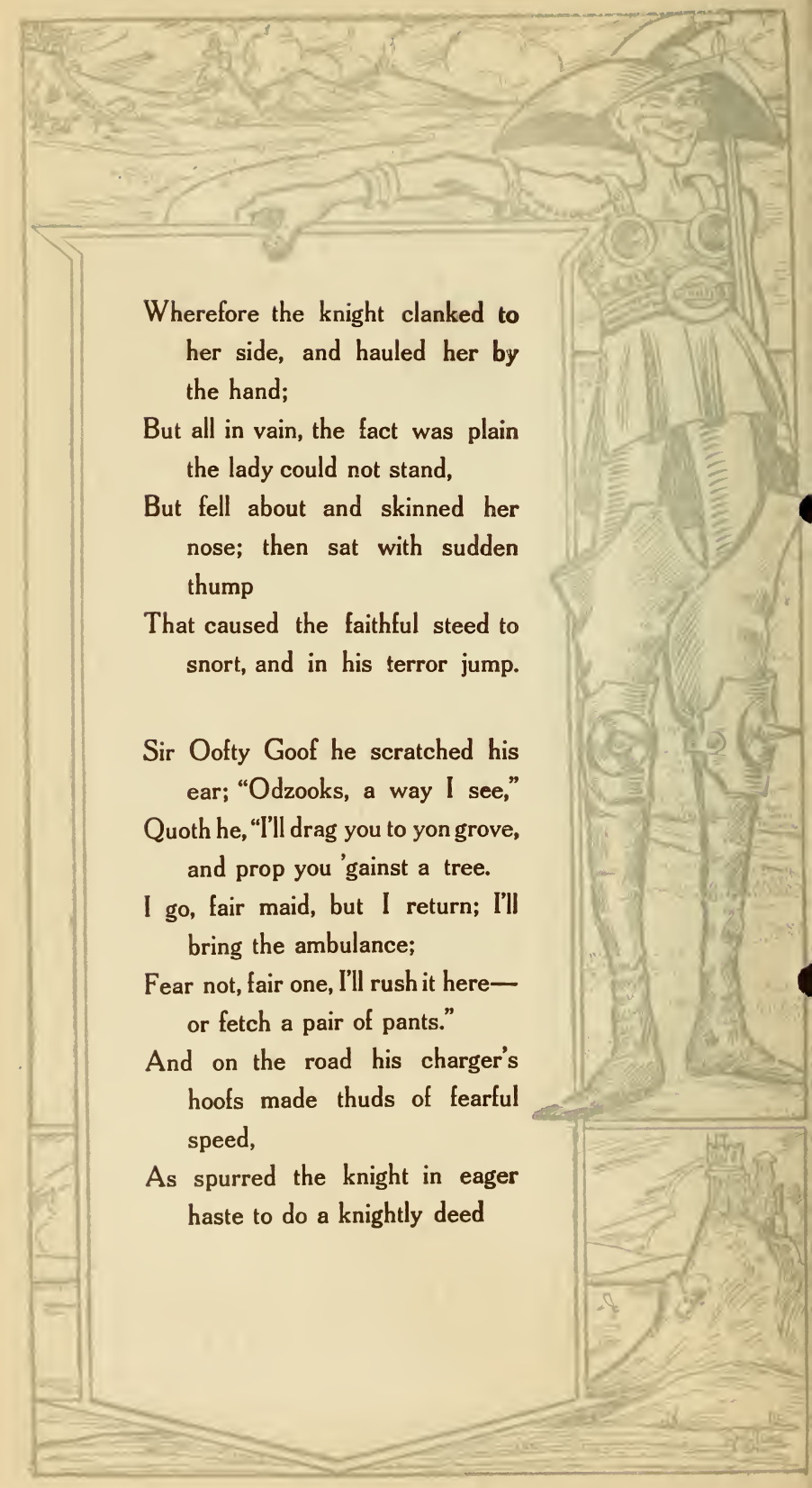
Author.



SIR OOFTY GOOF, of whom you've heard—
that famed and noble knight—
Went forth one day some mutt to slay, to keep his hand in right,
And as his charger trod the 'pike that from his castle led,
Behold, upon a stump there sat a maid with drooping head.

"Fair maid," 'quoth he, "thy wrongs are mine; why sittest thou with weeps?
Tell me, prithee, who caused those tears; I'll fix his clock for keeps."
"Alas Sir," sighed the maiden fair, "no man hath caused me hurt;
I sat me down and can't get up in this new hobble skirt."

"Canst walk?" the knight asked, as with speed from off his steed he clumb.
"Alas, I fear me, not," said she, "because my . . . toes are numb."



Wherefore the knight clanked to
her side, and hauled her by
the hand;
But all in vain, the fact was plain
the lady could not stand,
But fell about and skinned her
nose; then sat with sudden
thump
That caused the faithful steed to
snort, and in his terror jump.

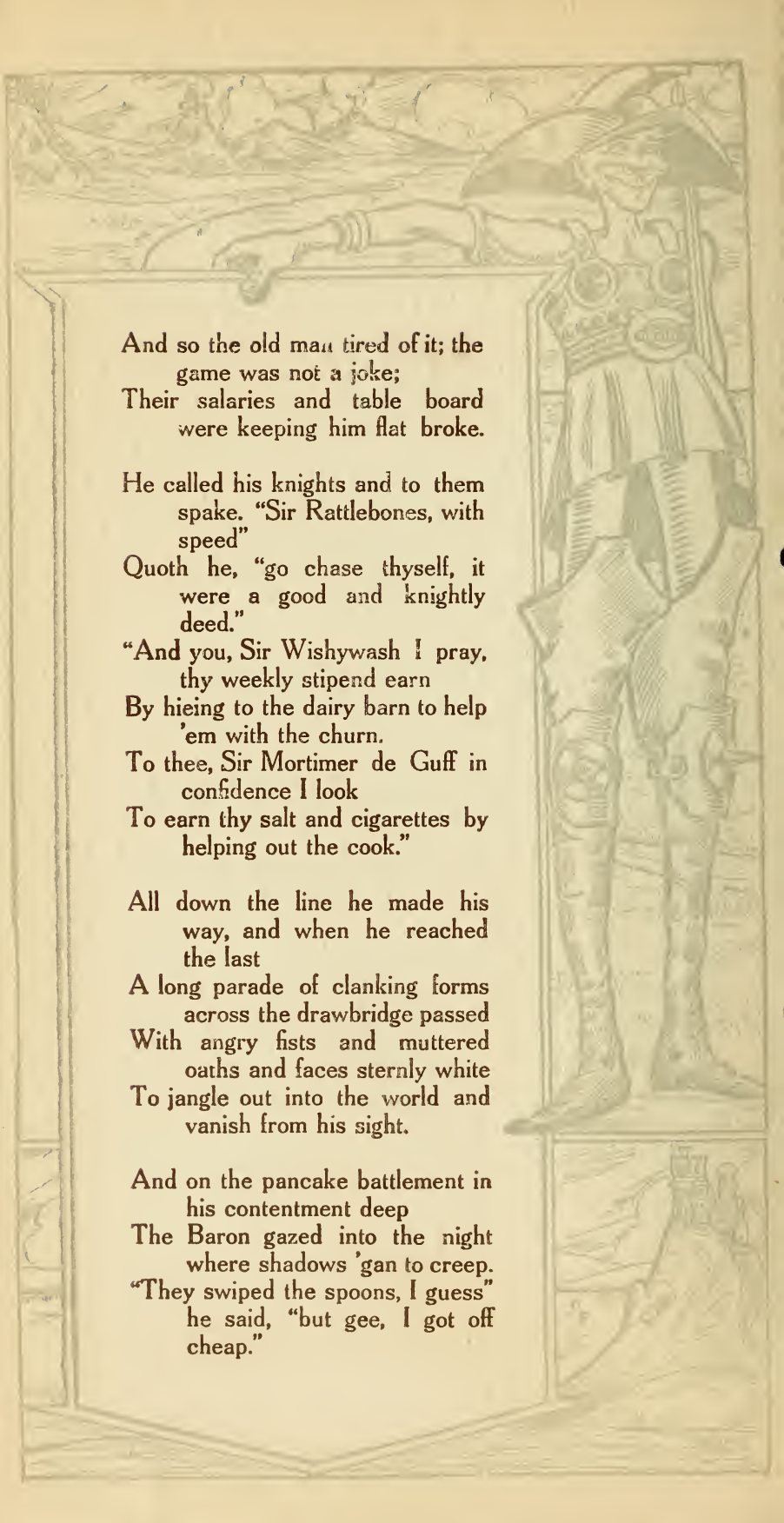
Sir Oofty Goof he scratched his
ear; "Odzooks, a way I see,"
Quoth he, "I'll drag you to yon grove,
and prop you 'gainst a tree.
I go, fair maid, but I return; I'll
bring the ambulance;
Fear not, fair one, I'll rush it here—
or fetch a pair of pants."
And on the road his charger's
hoofs made thuds of fearful
speed,
As spurred the knight in eager
haste to do a knightly deed

BACK in the Gauntstark hills there stood a castle old and gray,
Built like a battercake because they liked 'em built that way,
And in it dwelt old Hangerfrost, a Baron shy on looks
But just the sort of feudal lord you read about in books.

A score or more of able knights chock full of life and fight
Lived on old Baron Hangerfrost, and nearly every night
You'd hear them talk of pots and straights amid the nighttime's hush,
And sometimes speak of houses full, or maybe, of a flush.

The supposition was, of course, that if some neighbor rose
And wilfully, maliciously trod on the Baron's toes,
These knights would slam their armor on, rejoiced to do or dare
And lug the fool disturbers out and bury 'em somewhere.

But all the time they ate and drank all that their skins could hold,
And every week old Hangerfrost must pay 'em off in gold,

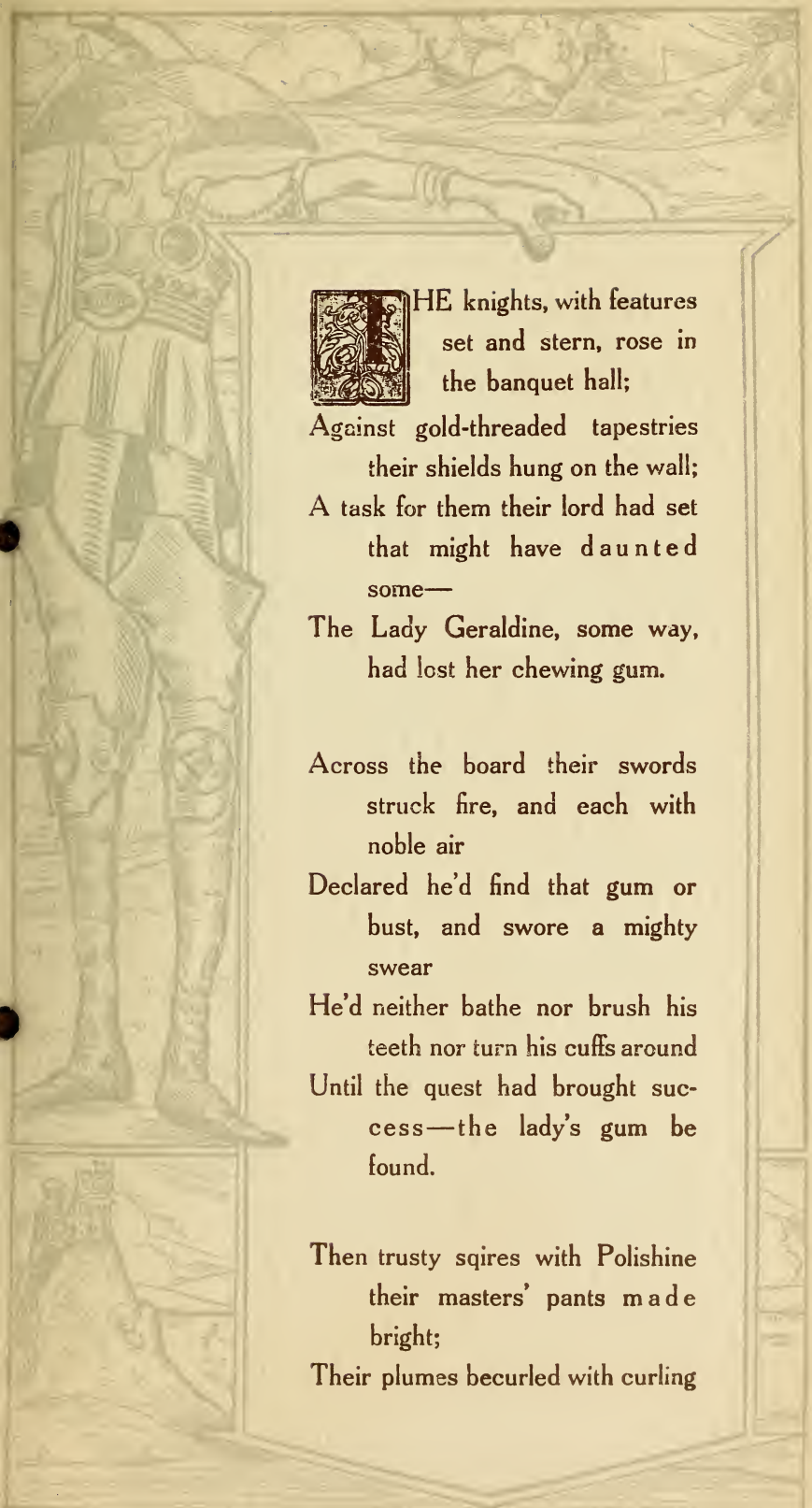


And so the old man tired of it; the
game was not a joke;
Their salaries and table board
were keeping him flat broke.

He called his knights and to them
spake. "Sir Rattlebones, with
speed"
Quoth he, "go chase thyself, it
were a good and knightly
deed."
"And you, Sir Wishywash I pray,
thy weekly stipend earn
By hieing to the dairy barn to help
'em with the churn.
To thee, Sir Mortimer de Guff in
confidence I look
To earn thy salt and cigarettes by
helping out the cook."

All down the line he made his
way, and when he reached
the last
A long parade of clanking forms
across the drawbridge passed
With angry fists and muttered
oaths and faces sternly white
To jangle out into the world and
vanish from his sight.

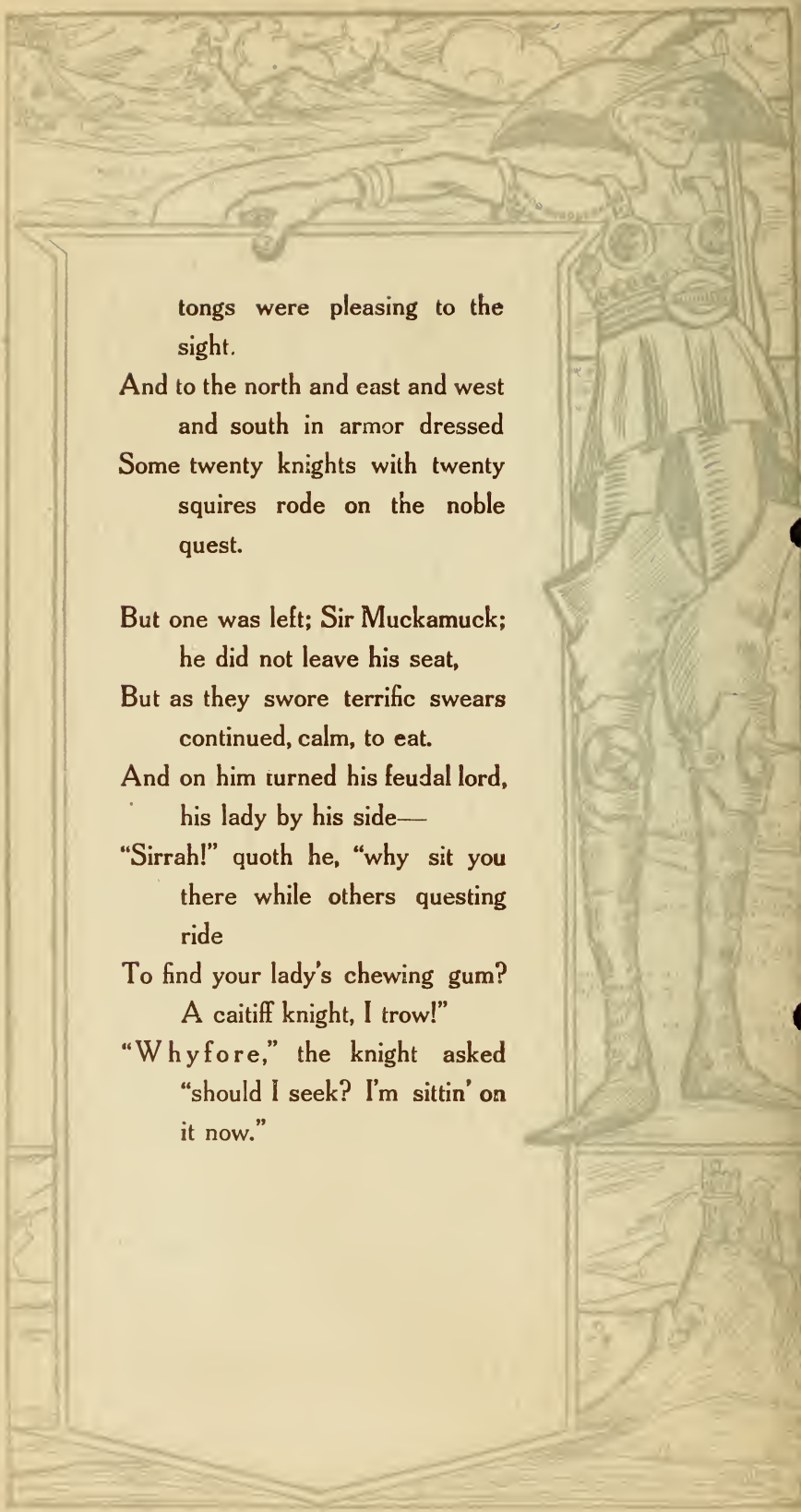
And on the pancake battlement in
his contentment deep
The Baron gazed into the night
where shadows 'gan to creep.
"They swiped the spoons, I guess"
he said, "but gee, I got off
cheap."



THE knights, with features
set and stern, rose in
the banquet hall;
Against gold-threaded tapestries
their shields hung on the wall;
A task for them their lord had set
that might have daunted
some—
The Lady Geraldine, some way,
had lost her chewing gum.

Across the board their swords
struck fire, and each with
noble air
Declared he'd find that gum or
bust, and swore a mighty
swear
He'd neither bathe nor brush his
teeth nor turn his cuffs around
Until the quest had brought suc-
cess—the lady's gum be
found.

Then trusty sqires with Polishine
their masters' pants made
bright;
Their plumes becurled with curling



tongs were pleasing to the sight.
And to the north and east and west and south in armor dressed
Some twenty knights with twenty squires rode on the noble quest.

But one was left; Sir Muckamuck; he did not leave his seat,
But as they swore terrific swears continued, calm, to eat.
And on him turned his feudal lord, his lady by his side—
"Sirrah!" quoth he, "why sit you there while others questing ride
To find your lady's chewing gum? A caitiff knight, I trow!"
"Whyfore," the knight asked "should I seek? I'm sittin' on it now."

SIR ANSELAM DE TURNVEREIN of Good King Arthur's court,
Sat up in bed and called his squire. "Get thou a move on, Sport,"
Quoth he; "A day hath just began —a day that we must spend
Ere we can sleep again and know that it hath reached its end."

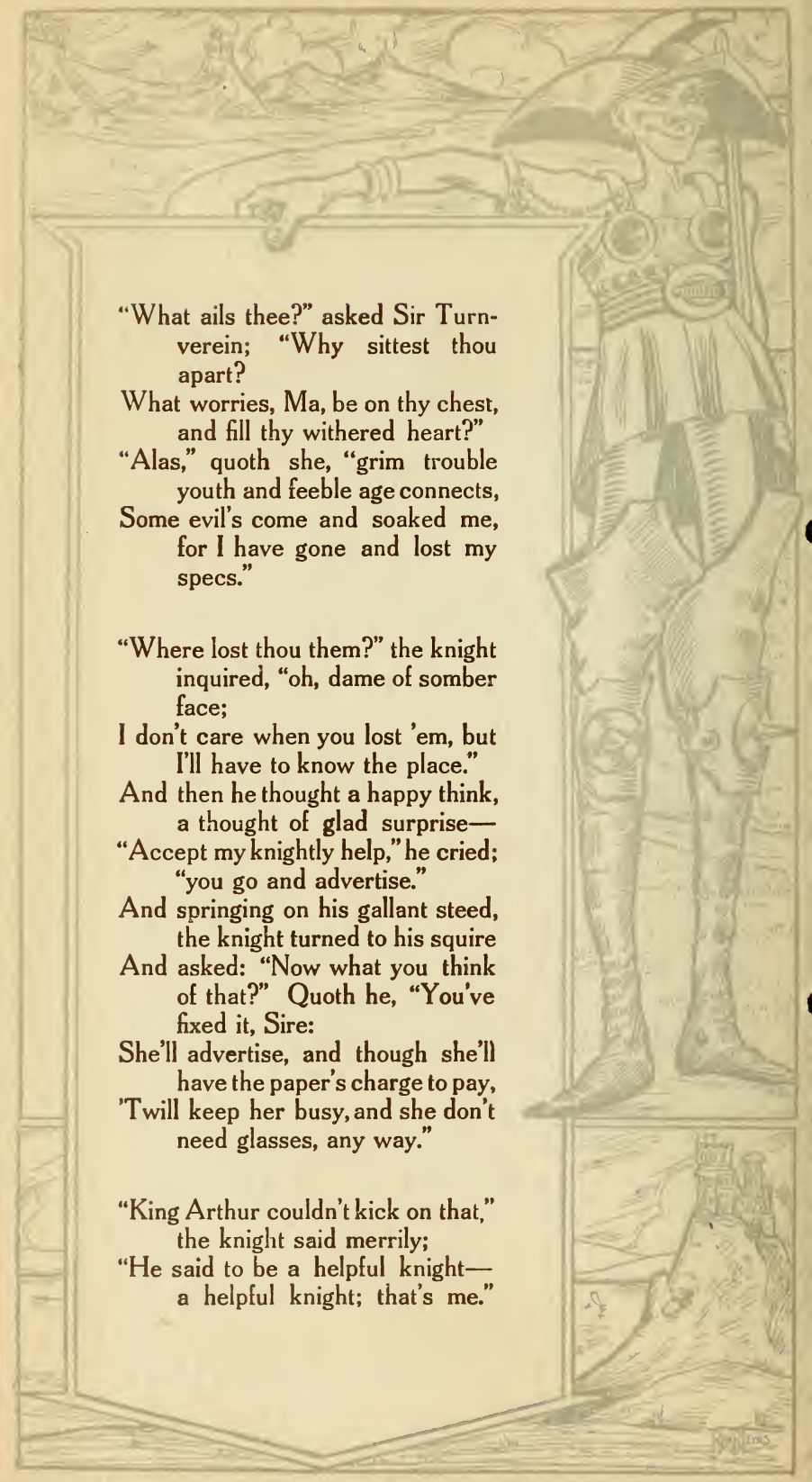
"True, Sire," the faithful squire replied, and shook a shirt of mail;
"A day of deeds, and knightly dope knows no sich word as fail."

. . . . . .

Behold out in the courtyard dim the goodly charger stands;
Upon his back with clashing leap the good knight swiftly lands;
And out upon the high-road gray he rides serene and strong,
Prepared to meet adventure or whatever comes along.

. . . . . .

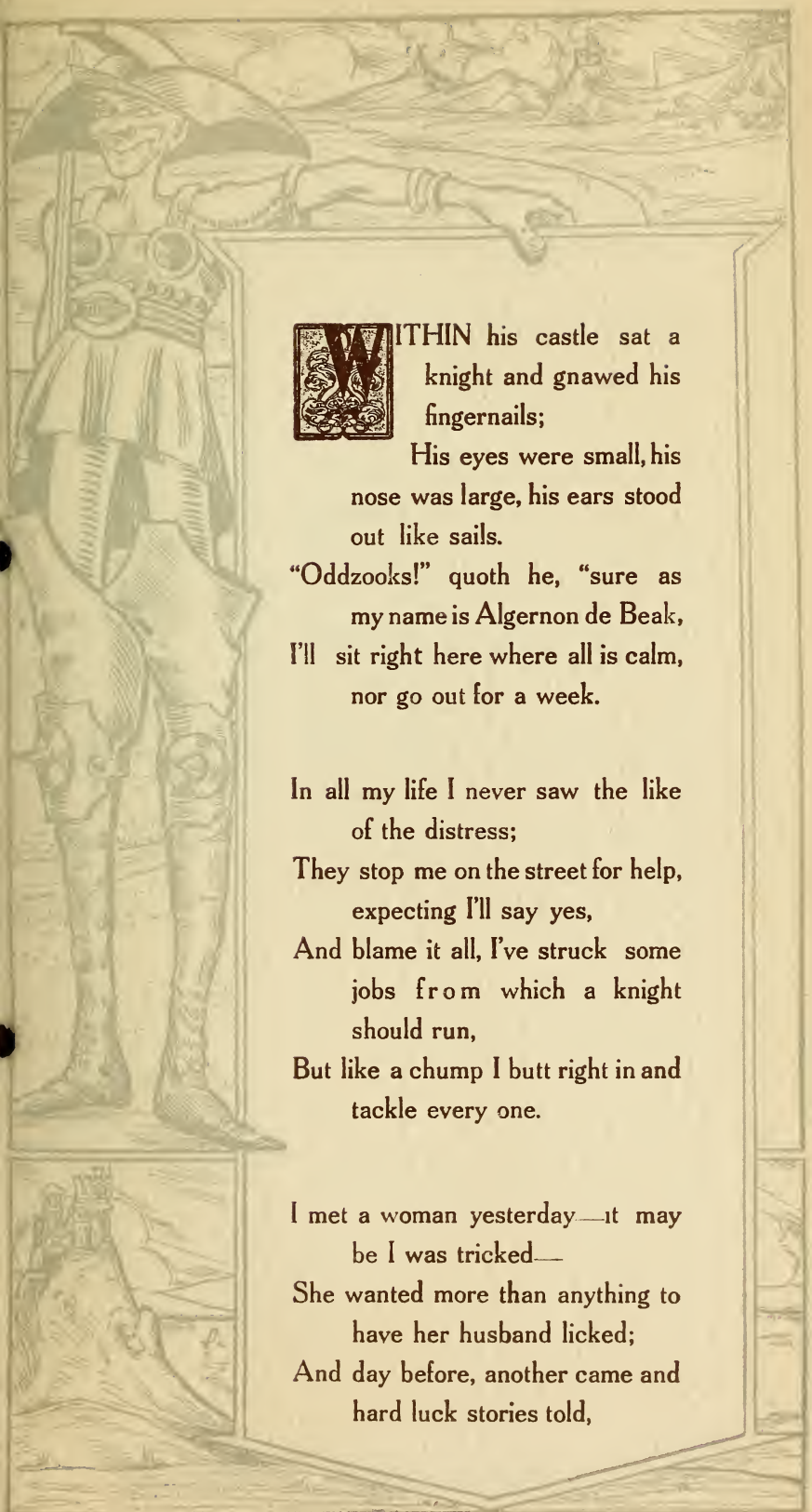
An aged dame sat on a stump—a crone, devoid of grace
Perceiving which the good knight growled and groaned and made a face.
But just behind him rode his squire, a young apprentice knight,
And it was up to him to see the job was handled right.



"What ails thee?" asked Sir Turnverein; "Why sittest thou apart?
What worries, Ma, be on thy chest, and fill thy withered heart?"
"Alas," quoth she, "grim trouble youth and feeble age connects,
Some evil's come and soaked me, for I have gone and lost my specs."

"Where lost thou them?" the knight inquired, "oh, dame of somber face;
I don't care when you lost 'em, but I'll have to know the place."
And then he thought a happy think, a thought of glad surprise—
"Accept my knightly help," he cried; "you go and advertise."
And springing on his gallant steed, the knight turned to his squire
And asked: "Now what you think of that?" Quoth he, "You've fixed it, Sire:
She'll advertise, and though she'll have the paper's charge to pay,
'Twill keep her busy, and she don't need glasses, any way."

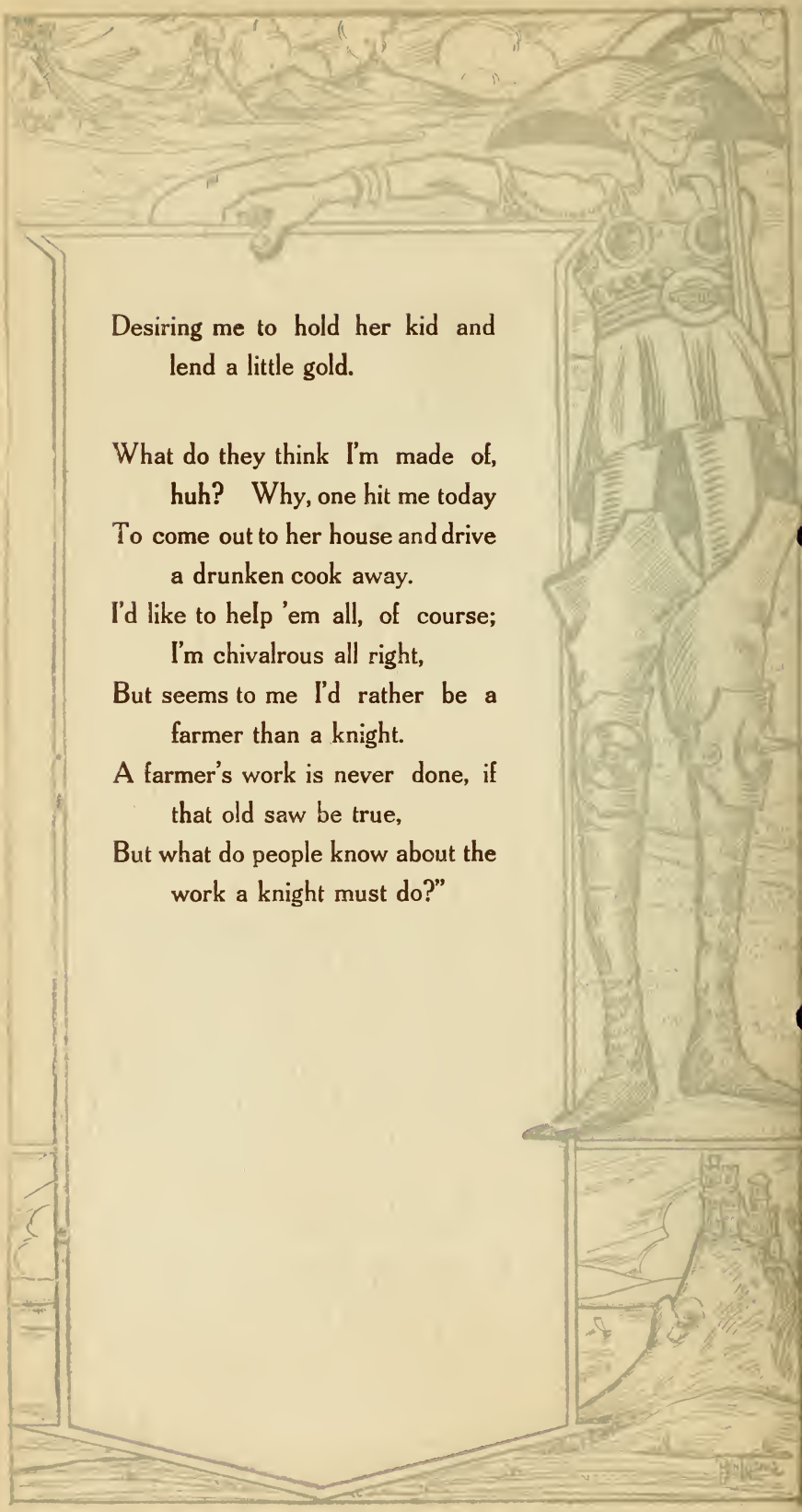
"King Arthur couldn't kick on that," the knight said merrily;
"He said to be a helpful knight—a helpful knight; that's me."



WITHIN his castle sat a knight and gnawed his fingernails;
His eyes were small, his nose was large, his ears stood out like sails.
"Oddzooks!" quoth he, "sure as my name is Algernon de Beak,
I'll sit right here where all is calm, nor go out for a week.

In all my life I never saw the like of the distress;
They stop me on the street for help, expecting I'll say yes,
And blame it all, I've struck some jobs from which a knight should run,
But like a chump I butt right in and tackle every one.

I met a woman yesterday—it may be I was tricked—
She wanted more than anything to have her husband licked;
And day before, another came and hard luck stories told,



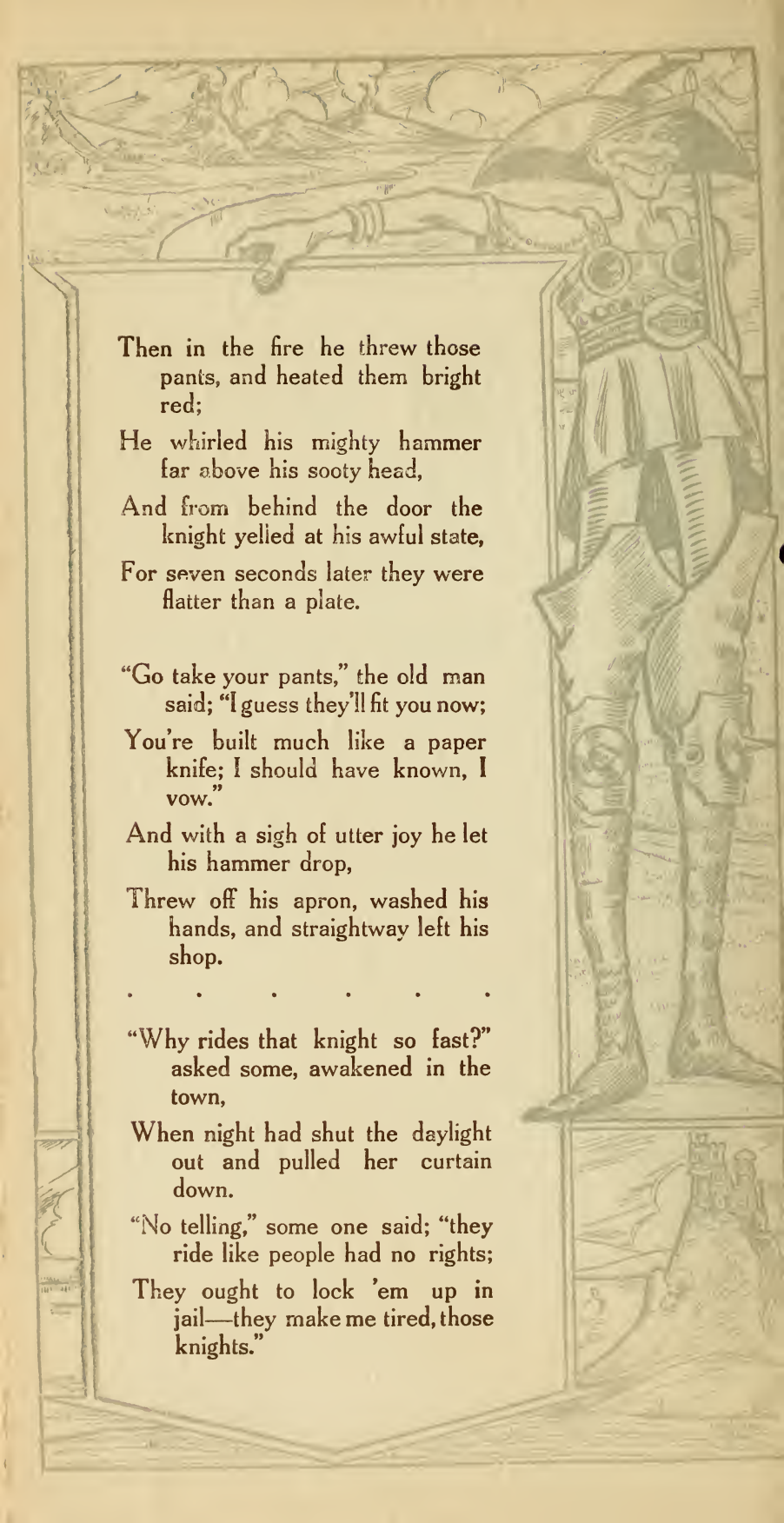
Desiring me to hold her kid and
lend a little gold.

What do they think I'm made of,
huh? Why, one hit me today
To come out to her house and drive
a drunken cook away.
I'd like to help 'em all, of course;
I'm chivalrous all right,
But seems to me I'd rather be a
farmer than a knight.
A farmer's work is never done, if
that old saw be true,
But what do people know about the
work a knight must do?"

OLD BUMBLERIGG, the Armorer, was working in his shop;
The ancient oak trees shivered when he let his hammer drop;
The sparks were yellow, flashing streaks that glimmered as they lit,
For Bumblerigg the Armorer was earnest when he hit.

Then came a young and callow Knight, and called him to the door,
And many a full, round knightly oath in savage tones he swore.
"These pants of mail," he said, "don't fit; Great Arthur, how they pinch!
You made these pants, doggone it, now you let 'em out an inch."

The armorer he heaved a sigh; such doings made him sore,
"Go take 'em off at once," he growled, "and get behind the door.
No man shall say my work is poor; I'll fix 'em right away,
And there will be no further charge —no second bill to pay."



Then in the fire he threw those pants, and heated them bright red;

He whirled his mighty hammer far above his sooty head,

And from behind the door the knight yelled at his awful state,

For seven seconds later they were flatter than a plate.

"Go take your pants," the old man said; "I guess they'll fit you now;

You're built much like a paper knife; I should have known, I vow."

And with a sigh of utter joy he let his hammer drop,

Threw off his apron, washed his hands, and straightway left his shop.

. . . . . .

"Why rides that knight so fast?" asked some, awakened in the town,

When night had shut the daylight out and pulled her curtain down.

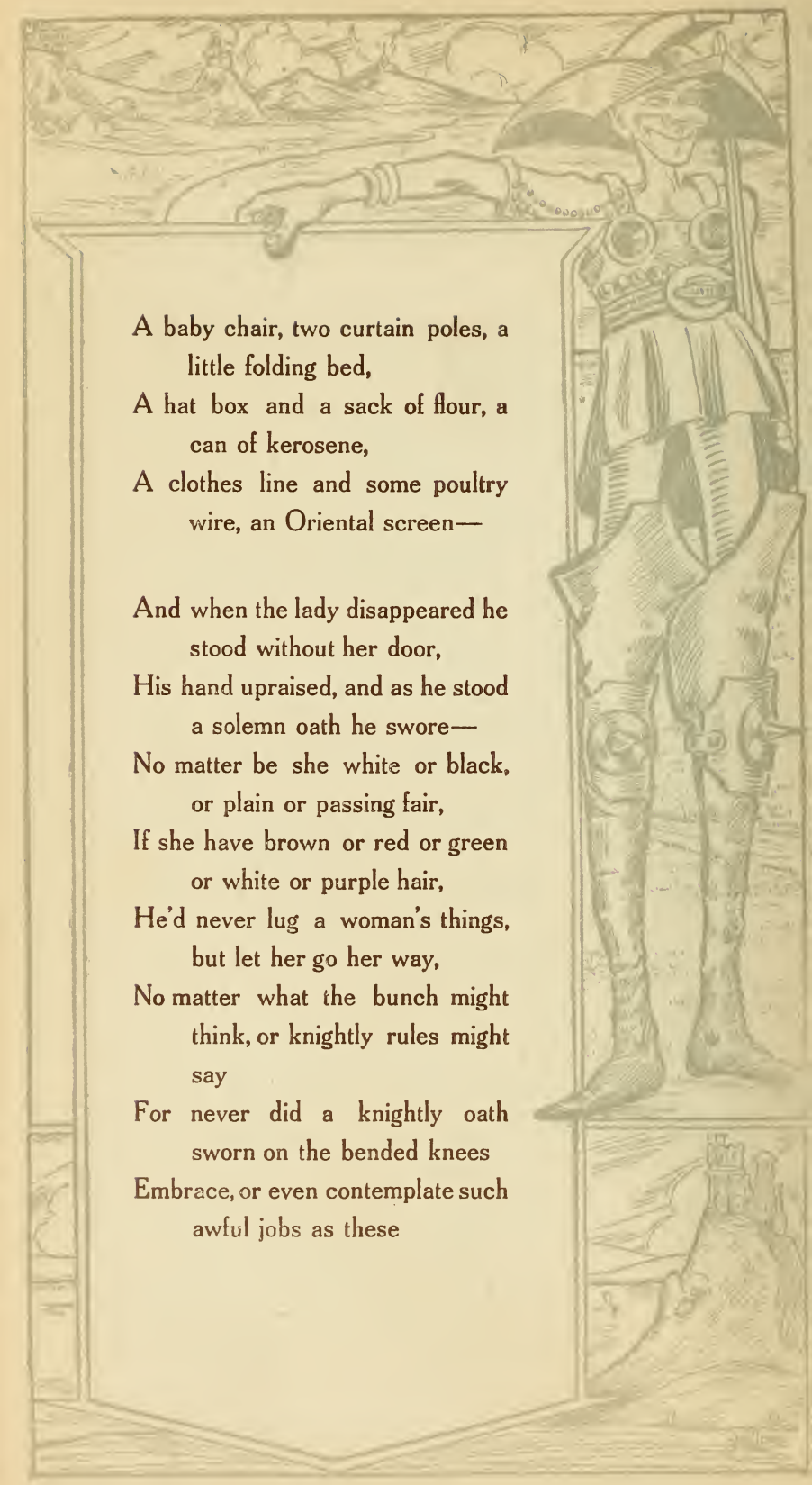
"No telling," some one said; "they ride like people had no rights;

They ought to lock 'em up in jail—they make me tired, those knights."

SIR MONTMORENCY DUB BALONG one day chanced to espy
A maiden with a basket and some bundles, passing by,
And with his knightly soul aflame and blessings on his luck
He stopped her and inquired if he might help her with the truck.

"I'm going shopping," said the maid; "I fear me much, Sir Knight,
I'll have me packages galore, some of them scarcely light."
But bravely did the knight protest that he must go along,
Because his soul was willing and his knightly arm was strong.

And when night fell upon the town and shadows dimmed the street,
Behind the lady dragged the knight with slow discouraged feet,
And in his arms were many things —a ham, three loaves of bread,



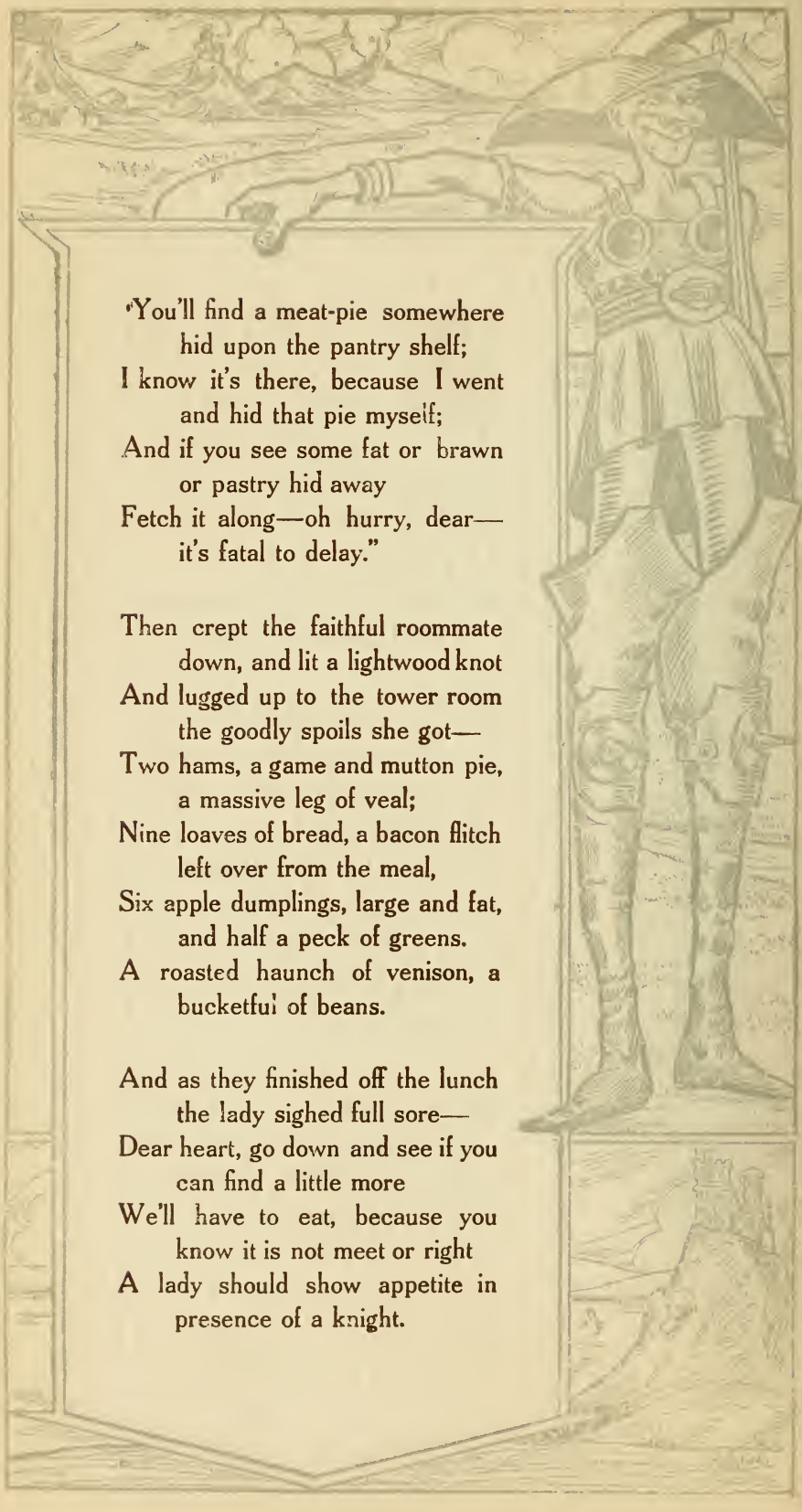
A baby chair, two curtain poles, a
little folding bed,
A hat box and a sack of flour, a
can of kerosene,
A clothes line and some poultry
wire, an Oriental screen—

And when the lady disappeared he
stood without her door,
His hand upraised, and as he stood
a solemn oath he swore—
No matter be she white or black,
or plain or passing fair,
If she have brown or red or green
or white or purple hair,
He'd never lug a woman's things,
but let her go her way,
No matter what the bunch might
think, or knightly rules might
say
For never did a knightly oath
sworn on the bended knees
Embrace, or even contemplate such
awful jobs as these

THE NIGHT was dark
and growing old, when
in her chamber dim
The fair Matildalina, she
by custom termed The Slim,
Spake to the Lady Antifat, who
shared her tower room
Also her rats and chewing gum;
her hairpins and perfume.

"Oh dear," she sighed; "oh woe is
is me. I'm sick as anything,
For I could only eat today a single
pigeon wing,
Because the knights stared at me
so it curbed my appetite—
Why CAN'T they let us eat
enough in presence of a
knight?"

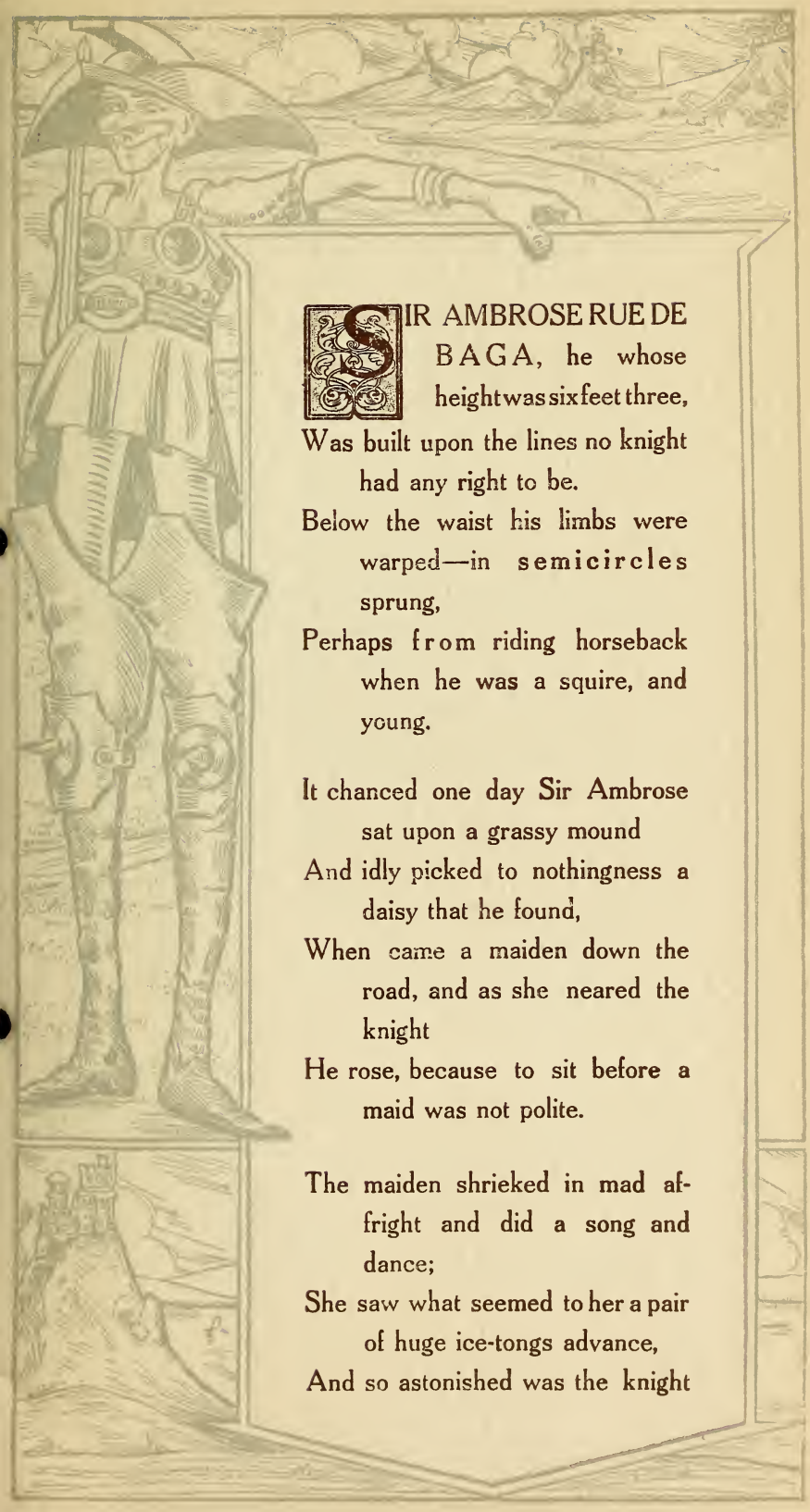
"Go easy, dear," her roommate said,
"I'll sneak down in the hall;
It may be they have left some beer
and pretzels, after all."
"And fetch a ham," the lady said,
"and get a loaf or so;
I'd go with you, but oh my love,
I'm far to weak to go."



"You'll find a meat-pie somewhere
hid upon the pantry shelf;
I know it's there, because I went
and hid that pie myself;
And if you see some fat or brawn
or pastry hid away
Fetch it along—oh hurry, dear—
it's fatal to delay."

Then crept the faithful roommate
down, and lit a lightwood knot
And lugged up to the tower room
the goodly spoils she got—
Two hams, a game and mutton pie,
a massive leg of veal;
Nine loaves of bread, a bacon flitch
left over from the meal,
Six apple dumplings, large and fat,
and half a peck of greens.
A roasted haunch of venison, a
bucketful of beans.

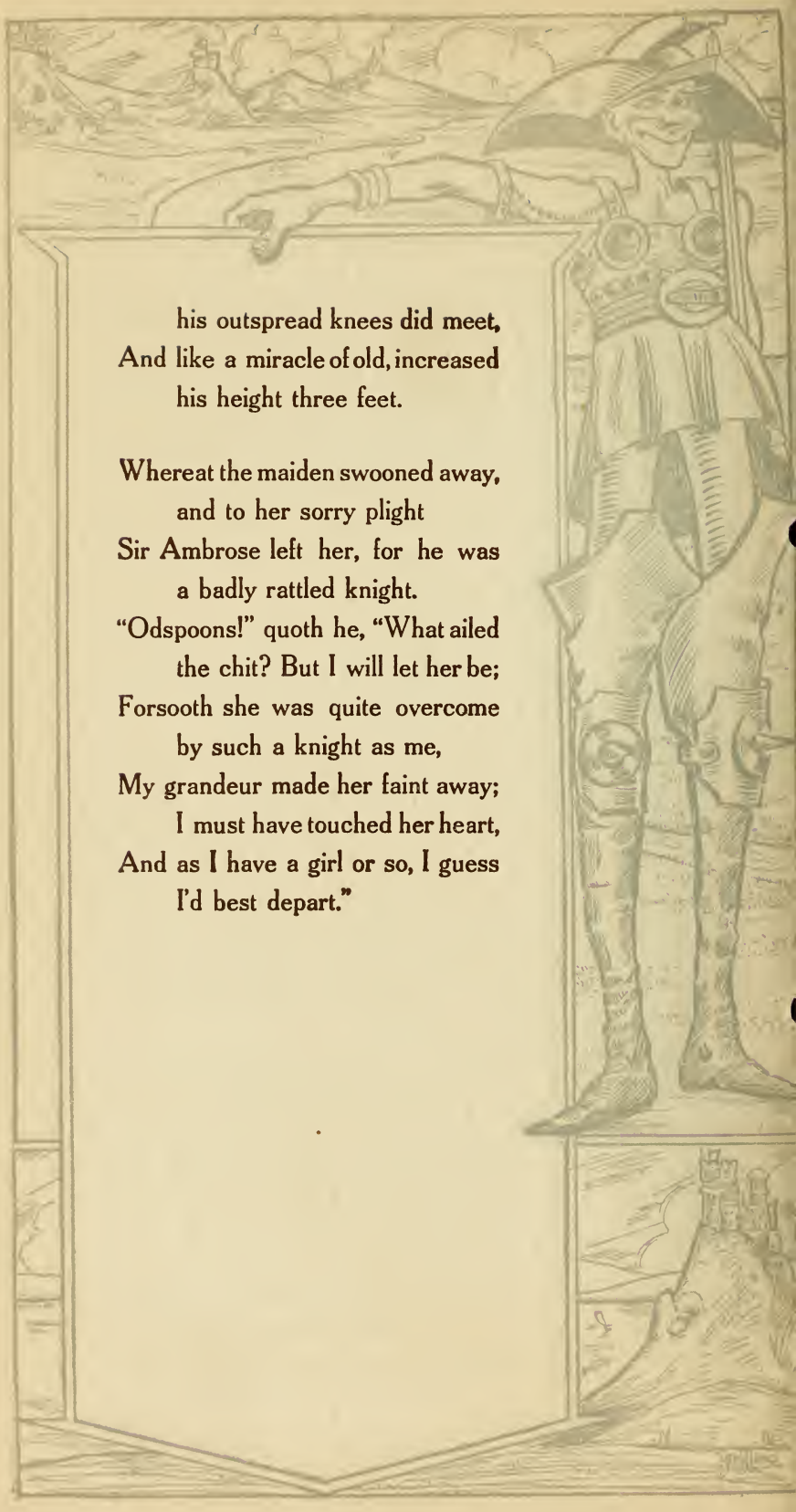
And as they finished off the lunch
the lady sighed full sore—
Dear heart, go down and see if you
can find a little more
We'll have to eat, because you
know it is not meet or right
A lady should show appetite in
presence of a knight.



SIR AMBROSE RUE DE BAGA, he whose height was six feet three,
Was built upon the lines no knight had any right to be.
Below the waist his limbs were warped—in semicircles sprung,
Perhaps from riding horseback when he was a squire, and young.

It chanced one day Sir Ambrose sat upon a grassy mound
And idly picked to nothingness a daisy that he found,
When came a maiden down the road, and as she neared the knight
He rose, because to sit before a maid was not polite.

The maiden shrieked in mad affright and did a song and dance;
She saw what seemed to her a pair of huge ice-tongs advance,
And so astonished was the knight



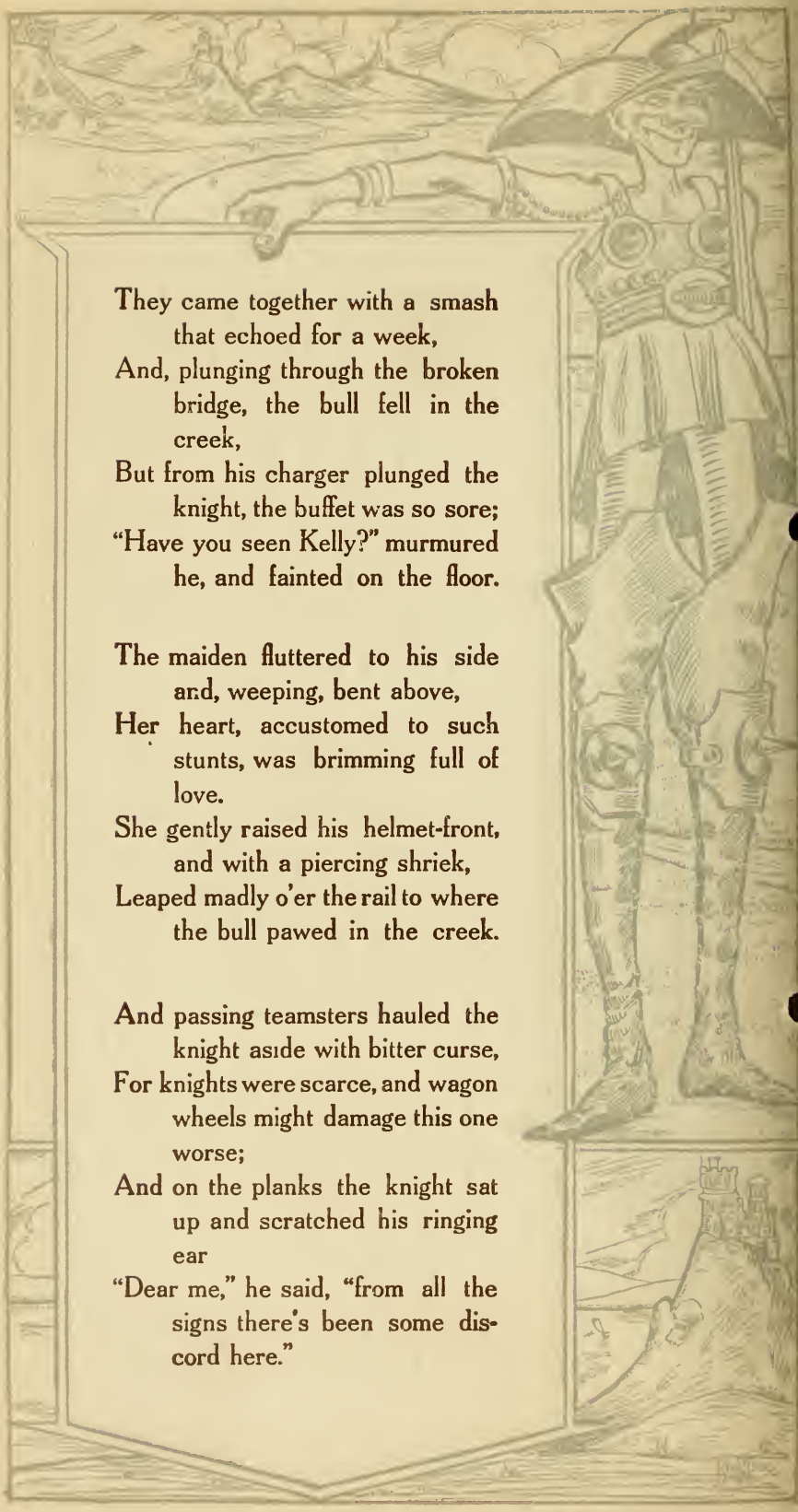
his outspread knees did meet,
And like a miracle of old, increased
his height three feet.

Whereat the maiden swooned away,
and to her sorry plight
Sir Ambrose left her, for he was
a badly rattled knight.
"Odspoons!" quoth he, "What ailed
the chit? But I will let her be;
Forsooth she was quite overcome
by such a knight as me,
My grandeur made her faint away;
I must have touched her heart,
And as I have a girl or so, I guess
I'd best depart."

GRIM visaged was Sir Gadabout; his manner was of silk,
But unkind friends were wont to say his face would sour milk.
He kept his visor down always to hide his lantern jaws,
And when he drank his Spanish wine he took the dope through straws.

'Twas on a bridge he met his Fate —a lissome gentlemaid.
She stood upon the rail and yelled, for she was sore afraid,
While on the shore there pawed a bull—a brindled beast of sin
Which feared to set foot on the bridge, lest he should bust it in.

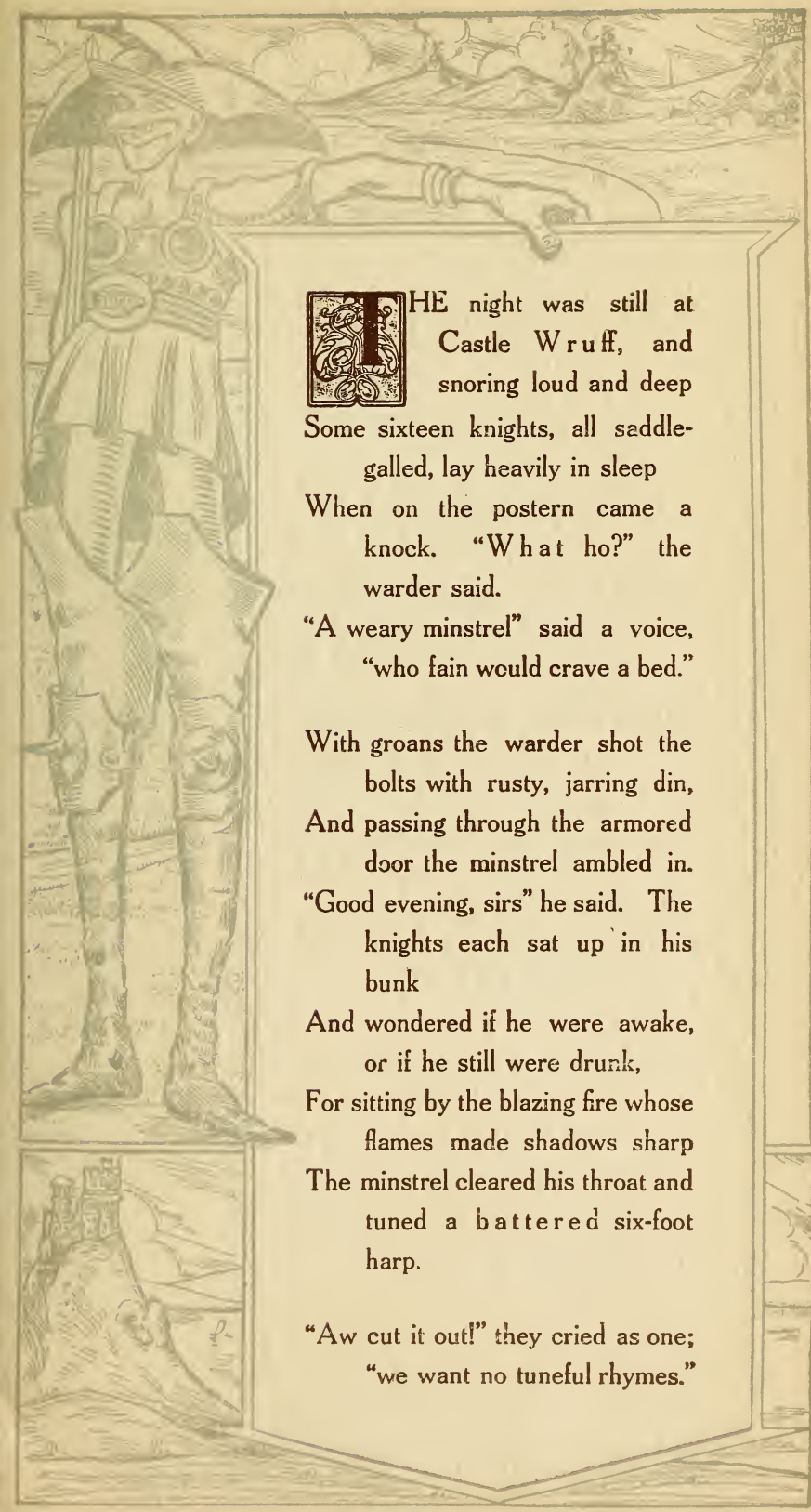
"Oh save me!" cried the maiden fair; "I trust thy knightly oath."
"Fear not," Sir Gadabout declaimed; "the world can't hold us both."
He put his lance in rest and charged, and, proving he was game,
The brindle bull took chances on the bridge, and did the same.



They came together with a smash
that echoed for a week,
And, plunging through the broken
bridge, the bull fell in the
creek,
But from his charger plunged the
knight, the buffet was so sore;
"Have you seen Kelly?" murmured
he, and fainted on the floor.

The maiden fluttered to his side
and, weeping, bent above,
Her heart, accustomed to such
stunts, was brimming full of
love.
She gently raised his helmet-front,
and with a piercing shriek,
Leaped madly o'er the rail to where
the bull pawed in the creek.

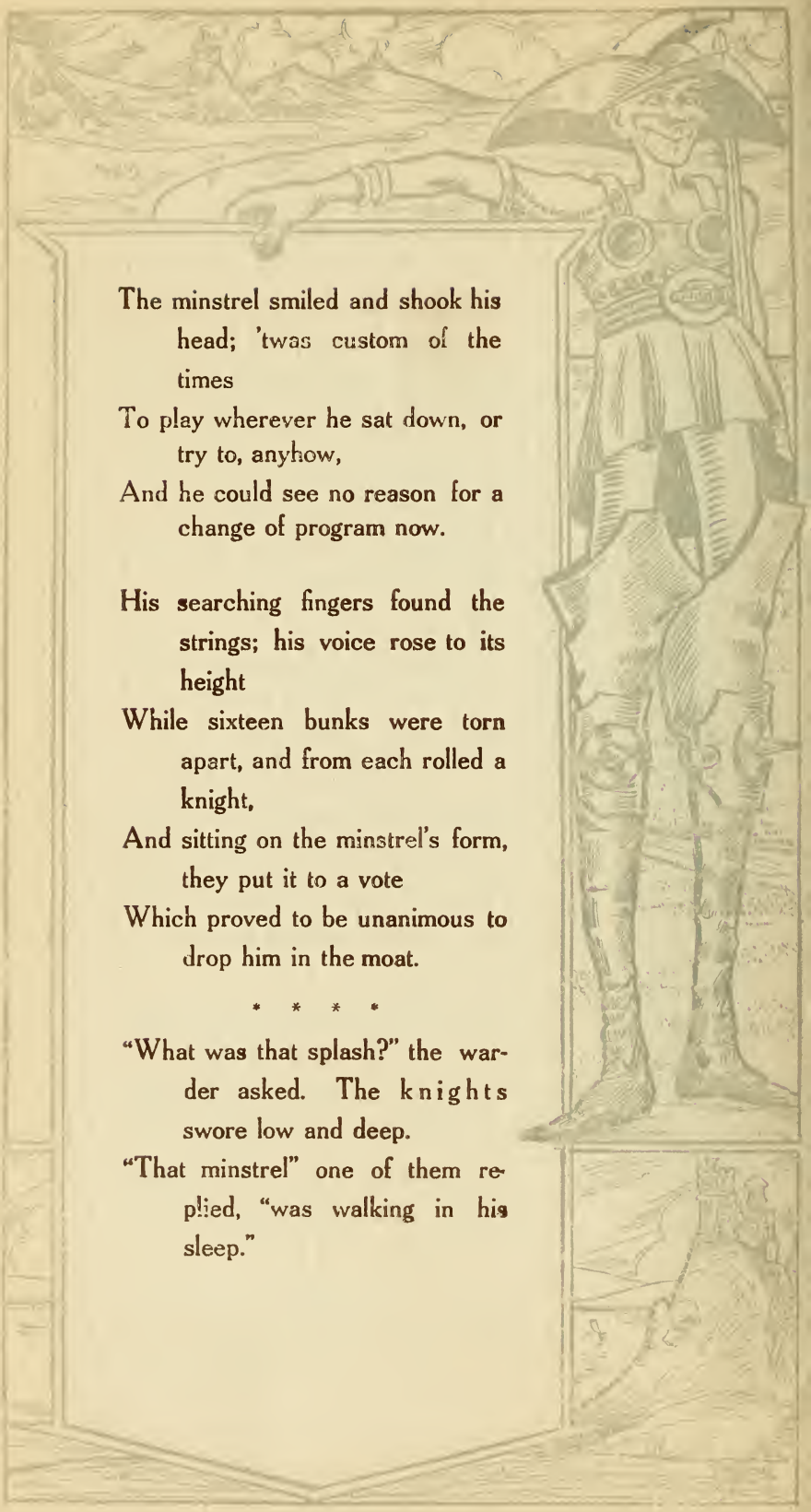
And passing teamsters hauled the
knight aside with bitter curse,
For knights were scarce, and wagon
wheels might damage this one
worse;
And on the planks the knight sat
up and scratched his ringing
ear
"Dear me," he said, "from all the
signs there's been some dis-
cord here."



THE night was still at Castle Wruff, and
snoring loud and deep
Some sixteen knights, all saddle-galled, lay heavily in sleep
When on the postern came a knock. "What ho?" the warder said.
"A weary minstrel" said a voice, "who fain would crave a bed."

With groans the warder shot the bolts with rusty, jarring din,
And passing through the armored door the minstrel ambled in.
"Good evening, sirs" he said. The knights each sat up in his bunk
And wondered if he were awake, or if he still were drunk,
For sitting by the blazing fire whose flames made shadows sharp
The minstrel cleared his throat and tuned a battered six-foot harp.

"Aw cut it out!" they cried as one; "we want no tuneful rhymes."



The minstrel smiled and shook his
head; 'twas custom of the
times
To play wherever he sat down, or
try to, anyhow,
And he could see no reason for a
change of program now.

His searching fingers found the
strings; his voice rose to its
height
While sixteen bunks were torn
apart, and from each rolled a
knight,
And sitting on the minstrel's form,
they put it to a vote
Which proved to be unanimous to
drop him in the moat.

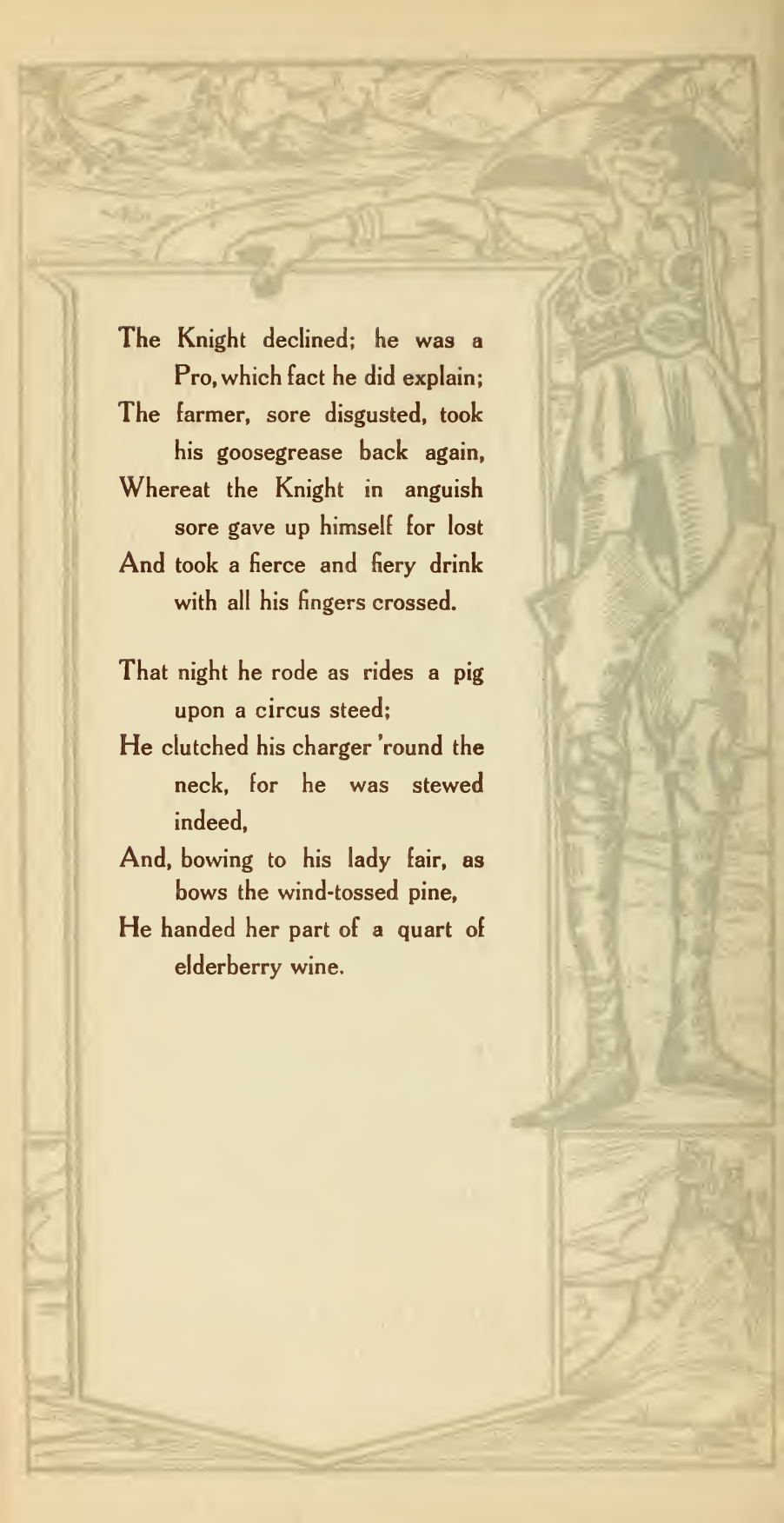
* * * *

"What was that splash?" the war-
der asked. The knights
swore low and deep.
"That minstrel" one of them re-
plied, "was walking in his
sleep."

SIR Gumshoo, known as Wot d'Ell, a noble Knight from Spain
Was one who was so strong a Pro he'd water on the brain.
He would not drink a dram at all, or even sniff at it,
And just the sight of lager beer would throw him in a fit.

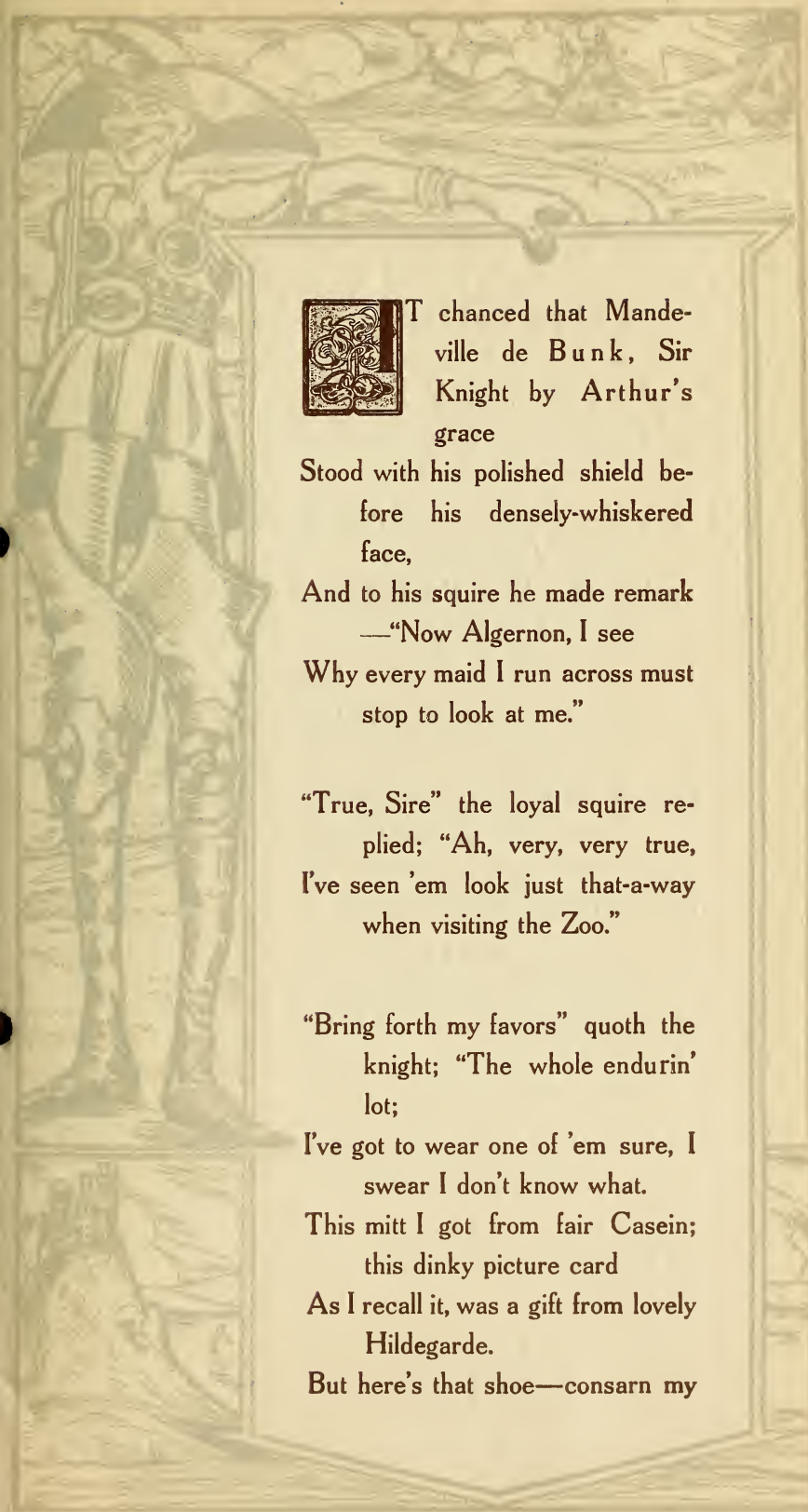
It chanced one day Sir Gumshoo rode upon a noble quest—
His lady had acquired a cold that settled on her chest,
And to the rural districts he repaired, for it was plain
He must secure some goosegrease that she might get well again.

He found a rude, bucolic rube who had goosegrease to sell;
Sir Gumshoo bought about a quart and all was going well
When he who rendered geese to grease made him a stealthy sign
And led him to a bottle filled with elderberry wine.



The Knight declined; he was a
Pro, which fact he did explain;
The farmer, sore disgusted, took
his goosegrease back again,
Whereat the Knight in anguish
sore gave up himself for lost
And took a fierce and fiery drink
with all his fingers crossed.

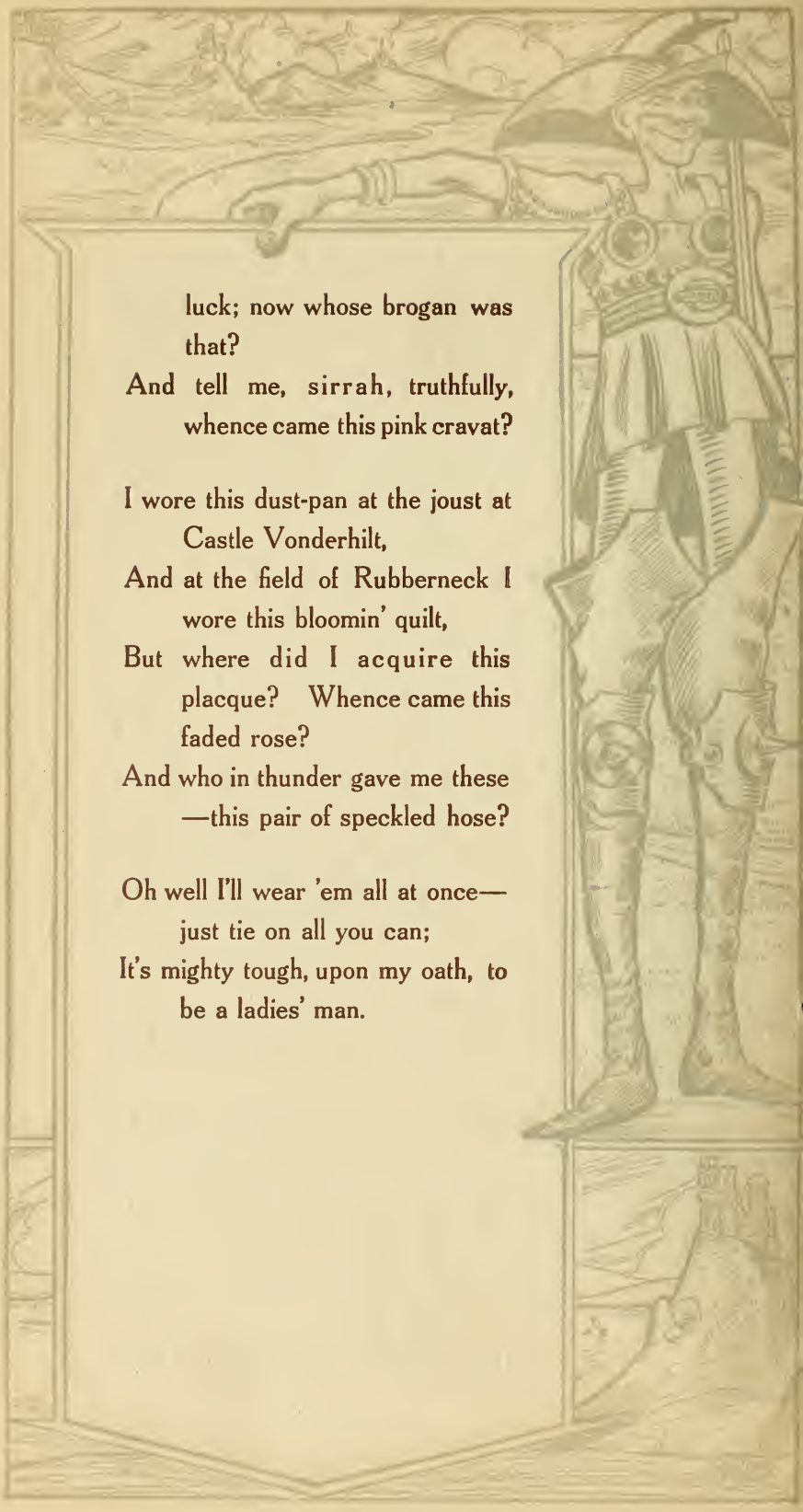
That night he rode as rides a pig
upon a circus steed;
He clutched his charger 'round the
neck, for he was stewed
indeed,
And, bowing to his lady fair, as
bows the wind-tossed pine,
He handed her part of a quart of
elderberry wine.



IT chanced that Mandeville de Bunk, Sir Knight by Arthur's grace
Stood with his polished shield before his densely-whiskered face,
And to his squire he made remark —"Now Algernon, I see
Why every maid I run across must stop to look at me."

"True, Sire" the loyal squire replied; "Ah, very, very true,
I've seen 'em look just that-a-way when visiting the Zoo."

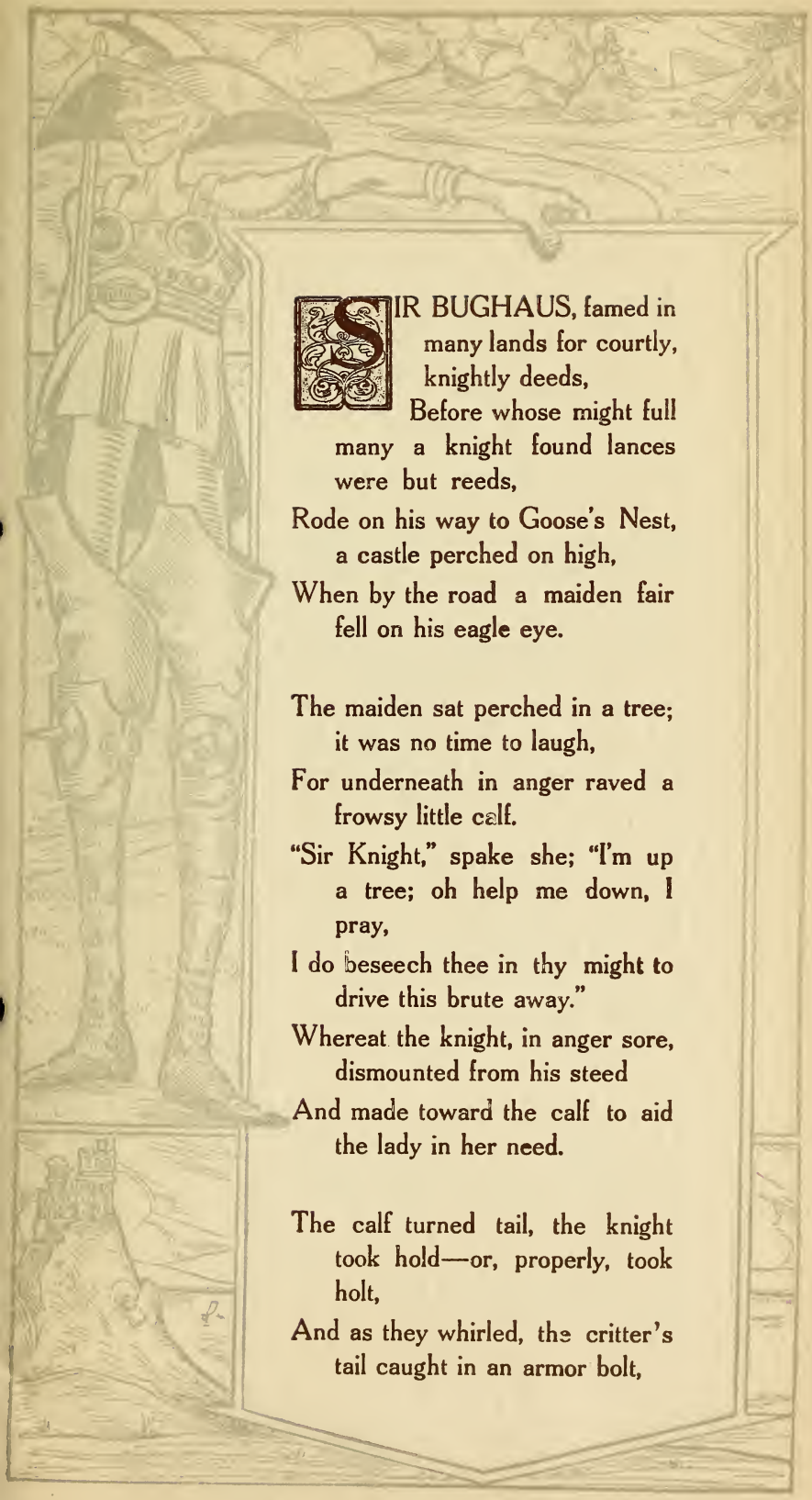
"Bring forth my favors" quoth the knight; "The whole endurin' lot;
I've got to wear one of 'em sure, I swear I don't know what.
This mitt I got from fair Casein; this dinky picture card
As I recall it, was a gift from lovely Hildegarde.
But here's that shoe—consarn my



luck; now whose brogan was
that?
And tell me, sirrah, truthfully,
whence came this pink cravat?

I wore this dust-pan at the joust at
Castle Vonderhilt,
And at the field of Rubberneck I
wore this bloomin' quilt,
But where did I acquire this
placque? Whence came this
faded rose?
And who in thunder gave me these
—this pair of speckled hose?

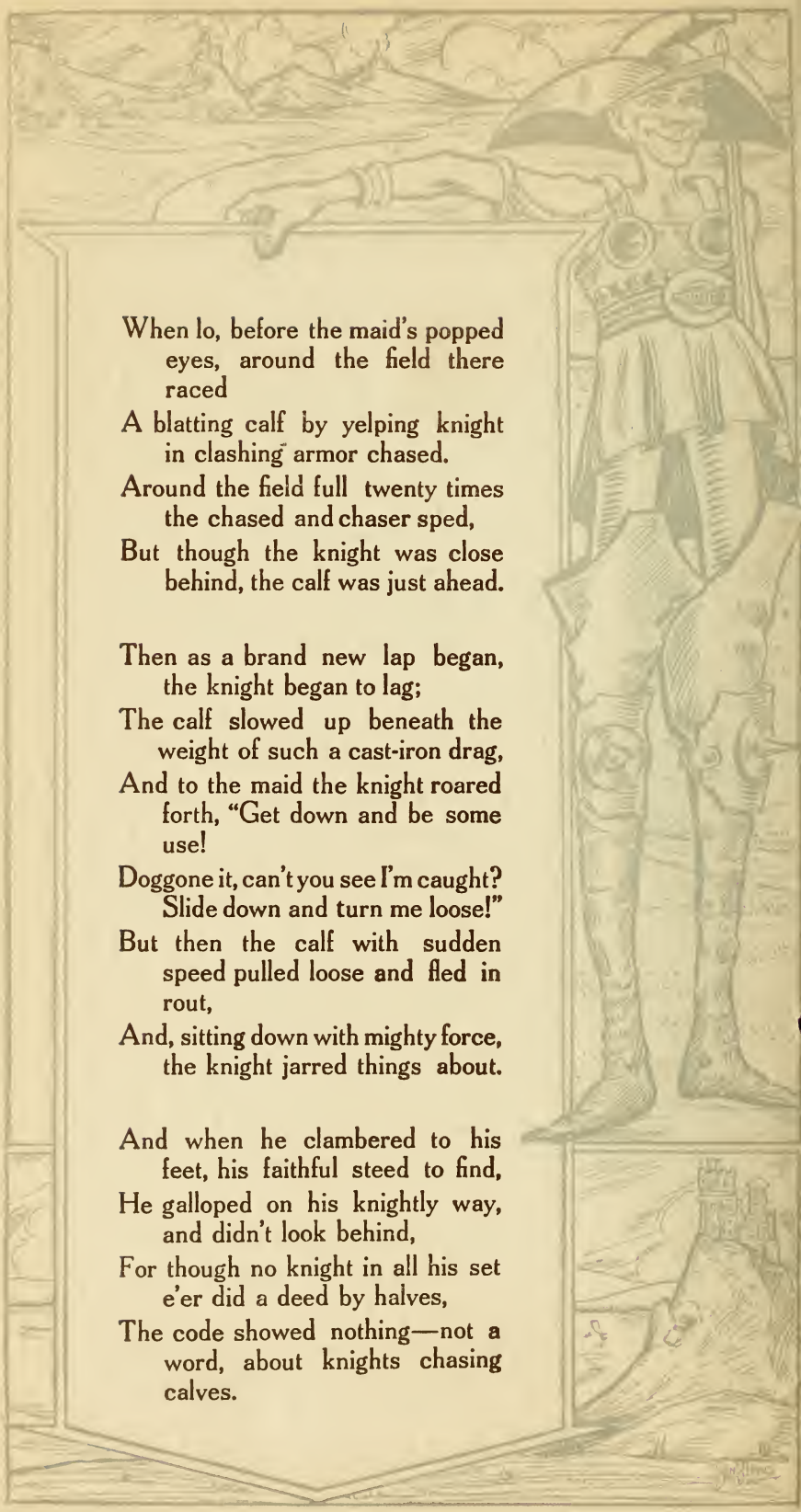
Oh well I'll wear 'em all at once—
just tie on all you can;
It's mighty tough, upon my oath, to
be a ladies' man.



SIR BUGHAUS, famed in many lands for courtly, knightly deeds,
Before whose might full many a knight found lances were but reeds,
Rode on his way to Goose's Nest, a castle perched on high,
When by the road a maiden fair fell on his eagle eye.

The maiden sat perched in a tree; it was no time to laugh,
For underneath in anger raved a frowsy little calf.
"Sir Knight," spake she; "I'm up a tree; oh help me down, I pray,
I do beseech thee in thy might to drive this brute away."
Whereat the knight, in anger sore, dismounted from his steed
And made toward the calf to aid the lady in her need.

The calf turned tail, the knight took hold—or, properly, took holt,
And as they whirled, the critter's tail caught in an armor bolt,



When lo, before the maid's popped eyes, around the field there raced
A blatting calf by yelping knight in clashing armor chased.
Around the field full twenty times the chased and chaser sped,
But though the knight was close behind, the calf was just ahead.

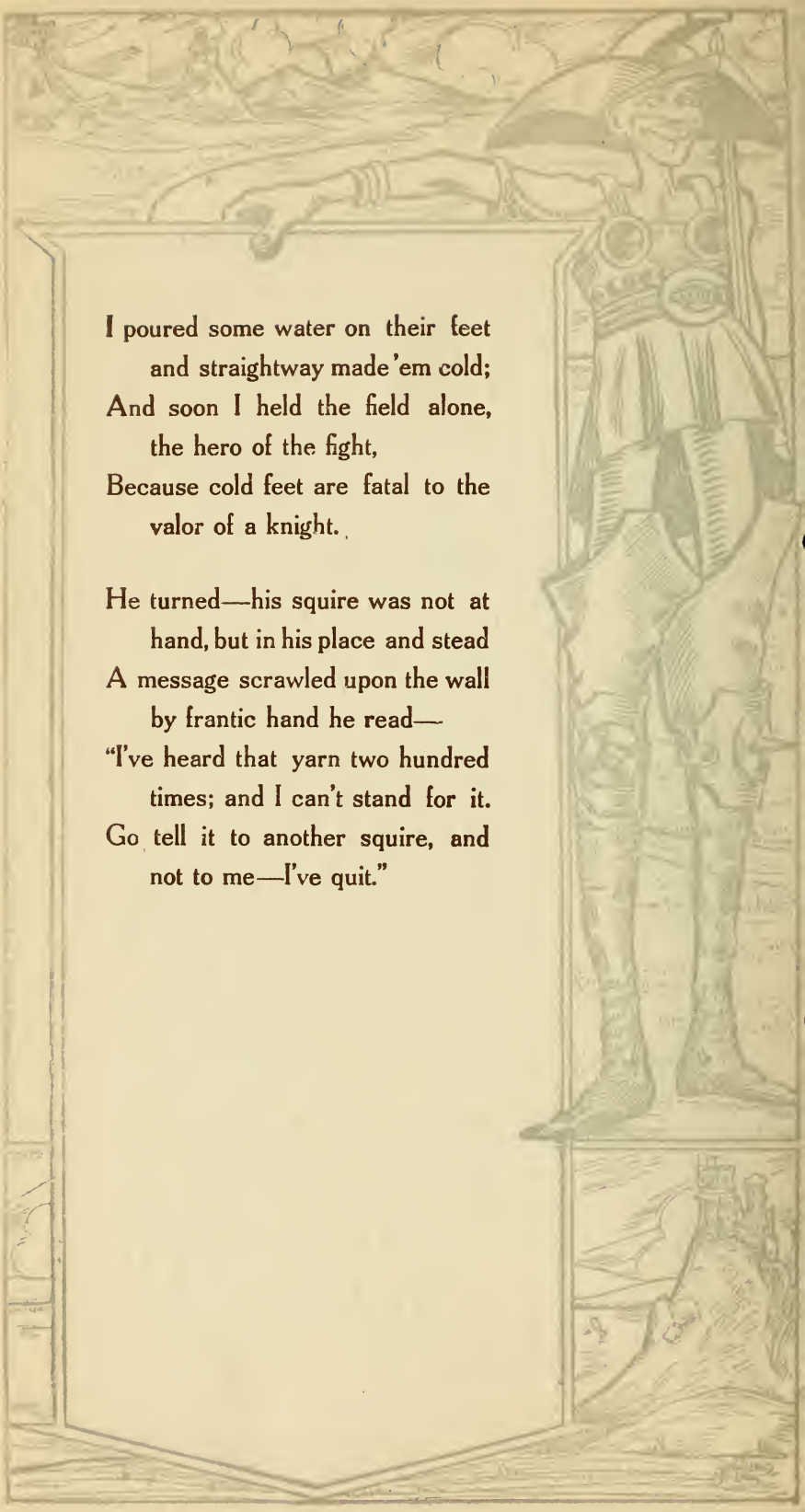
Then as a brand new lap began, the knight began to lag;
The calf slowed up beneath the weight of such a cast-iron drag,
And to the maid the knight roared forth, "Get down and be some use!
Doggone it, can't you see I'm caught? Slide down and turn me loose!"
But then the calf with sudden speed pulled loose and fled in rout,
And, sitting down with mighty force, the knight jarred things about.

And when he clambered to his feet, his faithful steed to find,
He galloped on his knightly way, and didn't look behind,
For though no knight in all his set e'er did a deed by halves,
The code showed nothing—not a word, about knights chasing calves.

IT WAS a wintry winter's eve, when in his castle hall
Sir Monkeyfayce sat at his meal, and on the panelled wall
His harness hung, by loyal hands made free of rust and bright,
For he was foolish on such things, becoming in a knight.

"Come hither, Rollo!" called the knight unto his faithful squire;
By Merlin, it's your turn to put some wood upon the fire.
My feet are cold, and by my sword, it is not fit or meet
A knight should try to hold his job when he has freezing feet.

"I mind me of one winter's day when I was sore beset
By twenty false and faithless knights, and would be fighting yet
Had not a thought flashed through my mind—a plan both wise and bold—



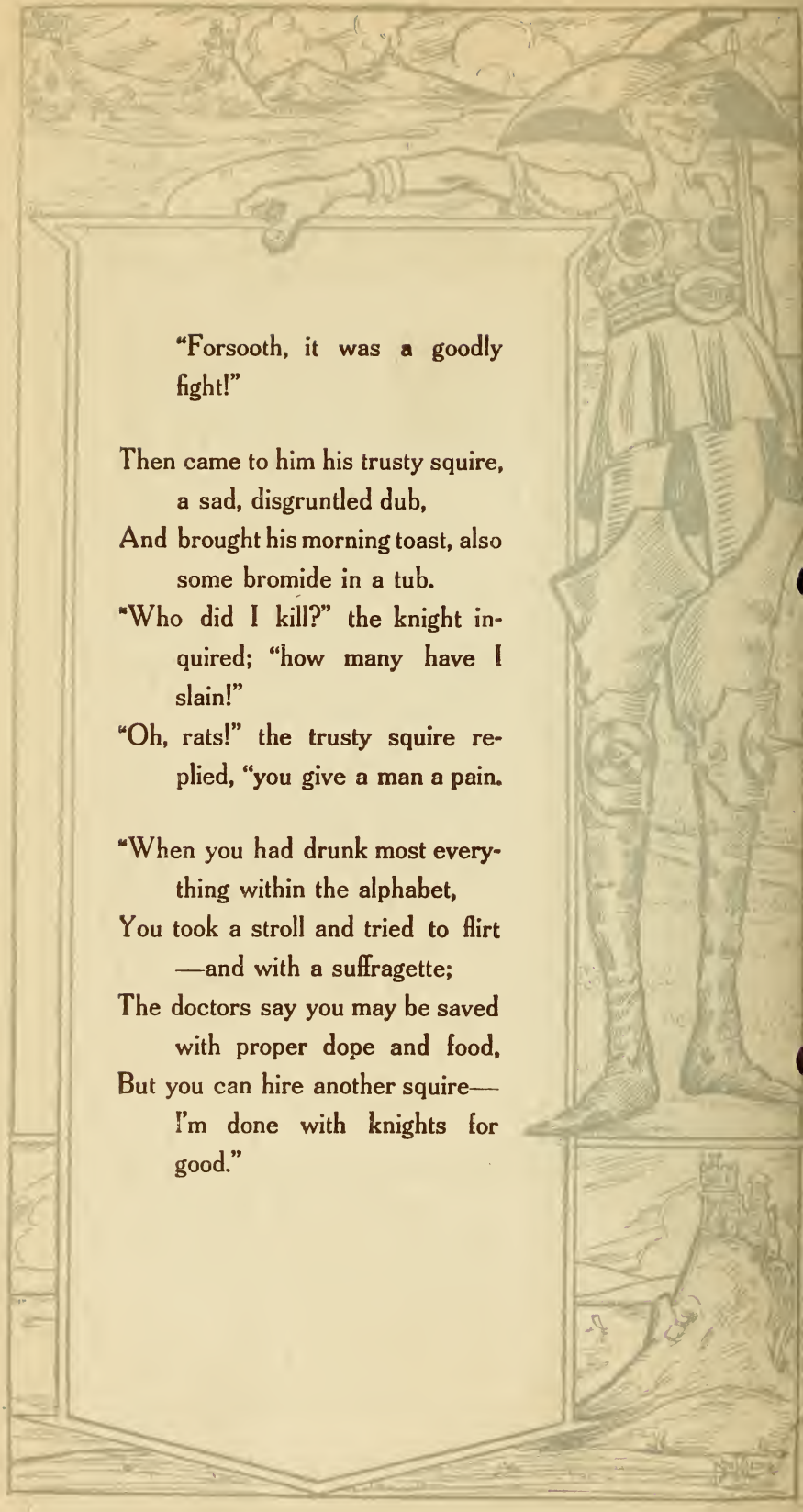
I poured some water on their feet
and straightway made 'em cold;
And soon I held the field alone,
the hero of the fight,
Because cold feet are fatal to the
valor of a knight.

He turned—his squire was not at
hand, but in his place and stead
A message scrawled upon the wall
by frantic hand he read—
"I've heard that yarn two hundred
times; and I can't stand for it.
Go tell it to another squire, and
not to me—I've quit."

SIR ARCHIBALD DE BLATHERSCOOP
lay on his knightly bed;
His tongue was like a scrubbing
brush; his eyes were swelled
and red;
He'd celebrated something, sure;
this fact he knew quite well,
But what it was, or where, or when,
he found it hard to tell.

A bump sized like a croquet ball
stuck out above his ear;
His lower jaw swung to one side
five inches in the clear;
His nose was shifted out of line
three inches to the right—
"Great Grief!" Sir Archibald re-
marked, "there must have
been a fight!"

His shield lay underneath the bed;
his shirt of polished mail
Was thrown into the washbowl and
had soapsuds on the tail;
His helmet on the gas jet hung,
red-hot from gas alight—
"Great Arthur!" groaned the knight,



"Forsooth, it was a goodly fight!"

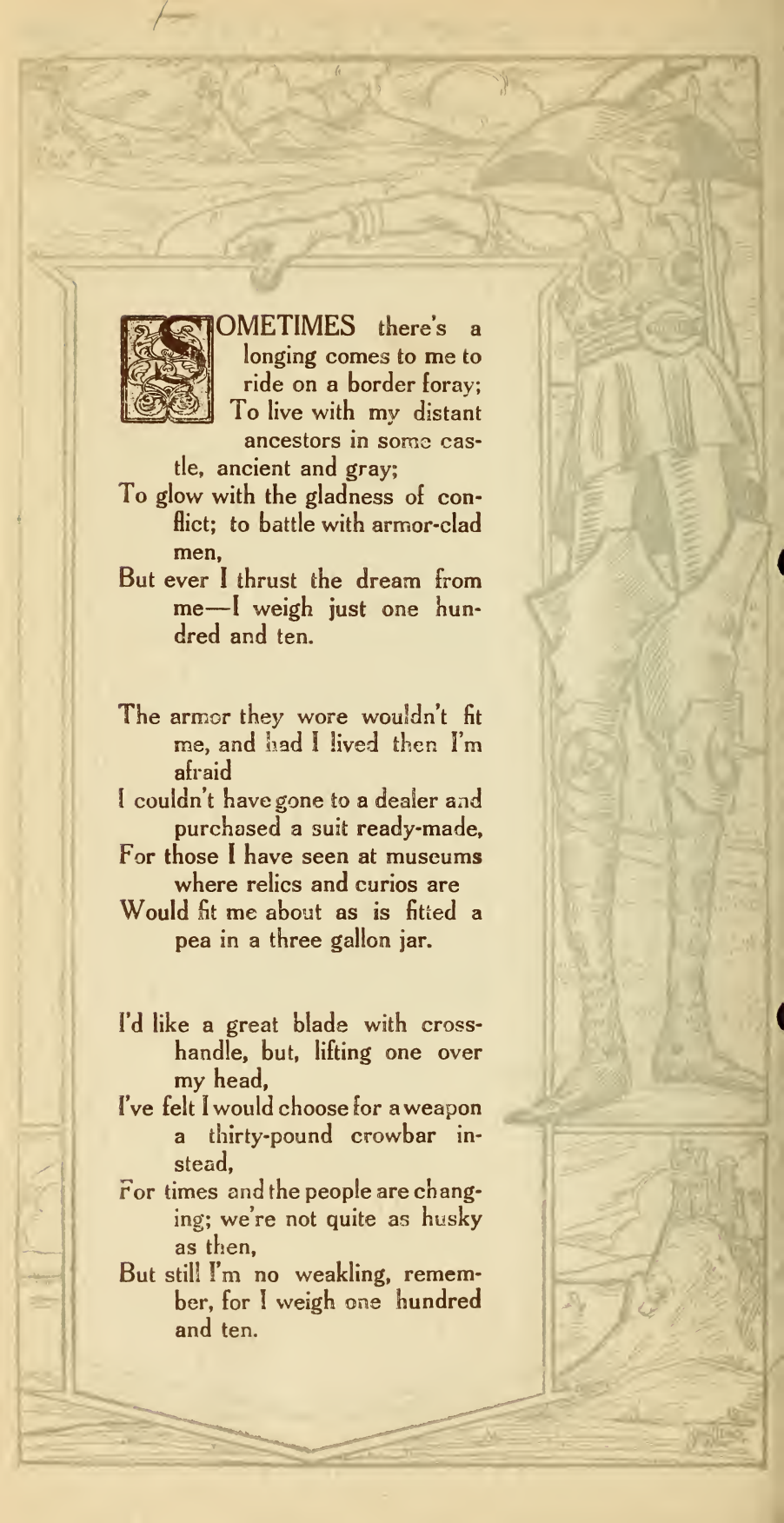
Then came to him his trusty squire,
a sad, disgruntled dub,
And brought his morning toast, also
some bromide in a tub.
"Who did I kill?" the knight in-
quired; "how many have I
slain!"
"Oh, rats!" the trusty squire re-
plied, "you give a man a pain.

"When you had drunk most every-
thing within the alphabet,
You took a stroll and tried to flirt
—and with a suffragette;
The doctors say you may be saved
with proper dope and food,
But you can hire another squire—
I'm done with knights for
good."

IT was a merry knight of old who ambled down the road;
The spirit of his joy made glad the charger he bestrode;
His trusty squire lagged far behind —he would not take a chance
Of being close enough to have his slats pushed with a lance;
For as he rode the knight was gay; who could be otherwise
When he is framing up a verse about his lady's eyes?

The verse was working very well beneath his helmet barred;
No ragged lines flowed from his brain; no wordy discords jarred
Until at length he struck a snag that left him in the air—
The lady's name! Odds rats forsooth! It stuck out lonely there.

Her name was Metempyschosis; the Muse was laid out flat,
For who could ever find a word to rhyme with one like that?
So on the knight in savage mood rode, bitter with the blame
Of those who tacked that on a maid to answer for a name.



SOMETIMES there's a
longing comes to me to
ride on a border foray;
To live with my distant
ancestors in some cas-
tle, ancient and gray;
To glow with the gladness of con-
flict; to battle with armor-clad
men,
But ever I thrust the dream from
me—I weigh just one hun-
dred and ten.

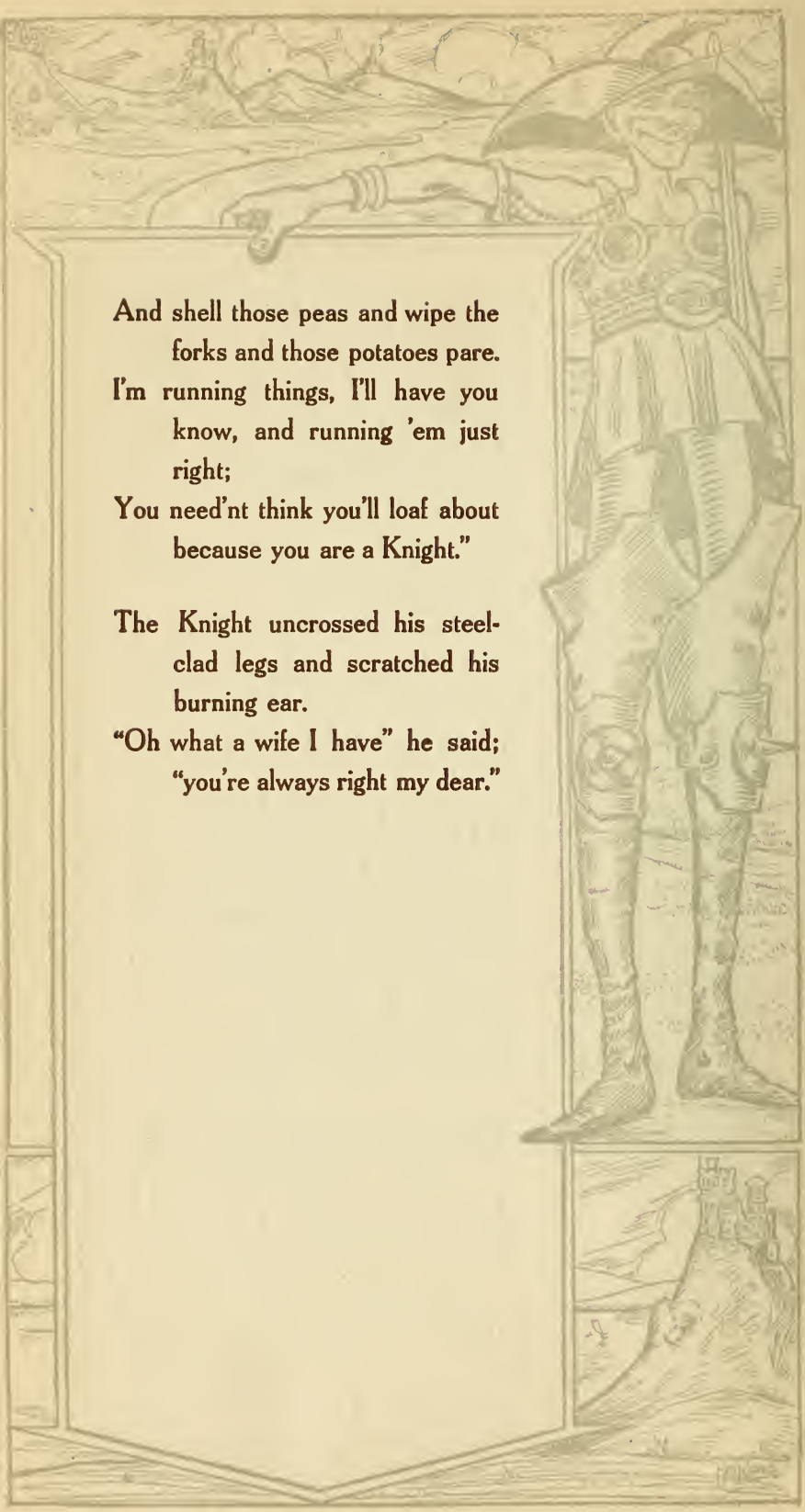
The armor they wore wouldn't fit
me, and had I lived then I'm
afraid
I couldn't have gone to a dealer and
purchased a suit ready-made,
For those I have seen at museums
where relics and curios are
Would fit me about as is fitted a
pea in a three gallon jar.

I'd like a great blade with cross-
handle, but, lifting one over
my head,
I've felt I would choose for a weapon
a thirty-pound crowbar in-
stead,
For times and the people are chang-
ing; we're not quite as husky
as then,
But still I'm no weakling, remem-
ber, for I weigh one hundred
and ten.

"MY love" quoth Lady Bandoline, Sir Ketchankillum's bride,
"From you I have no secrets, love; no evil thoughts I hide;
And to you I would like to say what you perchance, may guess—
You'll have to stop this chasing 'round for maidens in distress.

When you were not a married man, no doubt it had to be,
But stunts like that I'll have you know, won't ever go with me;
You'll have to learn to stay at home and help me boil the kraut,
And as for maidens in distress, you'll have to cut 'em out."

The Knight sighed deep. "But what" quoth he, "about my knightly oath?"
"Not much you don't" the lady said; "you did'nt swear for both,
You swore it as a single man— now get thee over there



And shell those peas and wipe the
forks and those potatoes pare.
I'm running things, I'll have you
know, and running 'em just
right;
You need'nt think you'll loaf about
because you are a Knight."

The Knight uncrossed his steel-
clad legs and scratched his
burning ear.
"Oh what a wife I have" he said;
"you're always right my dear."

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